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OF
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IN
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ETC.

BY

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Page 45,	Line 11,	......*for*	" made "	*read*	" make."
" 102,	" 23,	...... "	" Bihist "............	"	" Bihisht."
" 278,	" last,	...... "	" ave "...............	"	" have."
" 285,	" 11,	...... "	" ill-formed "	"	" ill-informed."
" 426,	" 24,	...... "	" زینبار "	"	" زینهار."

" 38,	" 3,	*after*	" Kom-feerooz," expunge full stop, and substitute dash —.
" 200,	" 19,	"	" capital," expunge full stop, and substitute a comma.
" 306,	" ·8,	"	" saints," insert full stop.
" 331,	" 21,	"	" (peach)," expunge full stop, and substitute a dash —.

believe that here it stood, and that it was for long the capital of this realm: the exact period when it ceased to be so, being very uncertain. Some have contended that Shushan (now called Shush-

* It is, however, mentioned in the Apocrypha. Vide 2 Maccabees, ix. 2.

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OF

TRAVELS,

&c.

CHAP. XXII.

Takhti Jemsheed.—Remains of Persepolis.—A brief Description of its Ruins as they now exist.

It is the general opinion, and I have no doubt a correct one, that here stood the ancient and magnificent city of Persepolis, once the capital of the Persian empire. Holy writ gives us no account of this city *, nor have profane historians said much regarding it; but we have every reason to believe that here it stood, and that it was for long the capital of this realm: the exact period when it ceased to be so, being very uncertain. Some have contended that Shushan (now called Shush-

* It is, however, mentioned in the Apocrypha. Vide 2 Maccabees, ix. 2.

ter) where Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes held their courts, was the capital; but there is no good reason to suppose that Shushan on the Ulai was anything more than an occasional royal residence.

As regards the beautiful and stately remains, now commonly called the *takhti jemsheed* (Jemsheed's throne), *chihl minâr* (forty columns) or *istakhar* *, the various speculations of antiquaries have attained no conclusion, save that these are the relics of some great building, either a royal palace or a temple of religious worship, or probably a combination of both, which stood conspicuous in the great city of Persepolis; which city has now been swept away by the hand of time. Whether this was the palace which Alexander the Great burnt in a drunken frolic, at the instigation of a vile courtesan, is a matter involved in doubt. Modern Persian historians assert that it was destroyed by the Moslem conquerors of this country, and the assertion is probably true. The very name has been lost, for the appellation of Persepolis is evidently of Greek invention, and the other titles by which it is now known, are unquestionably modern.

Some Persian chroniclers have supposed this city and palace-temple to have been founded by

* The name of Istakhar is also given to a mountain in the vicinity, and to certain other ruins which I shall afterwards notice. The word itself originally signified a tank or pool, but it is now obsolete.

Jân Ibn Jann, the Genii king who reigned on earth long ere Adam was created, and who, as some suppose, also built the pyramids of Egypt; but the prevailing opinion, strengthened by that much-loved heroic chronicle the Shah Nameh of Ferdousee, is, that it was founded by Jemsheed*, that noble monarch who reigned for seven centuries, during which long and happy time, none of his loving subjects died, or suffered from the least illness of body or mind!—Who would not have lived in the days of the illustrious Jemsheed?

These venerable remains have been so frequently and minutely described by many travellers, that it is with great diffidence that I attempt to give any account of them; as I have discovered nothing new, and am unable to broach any novel theory regarding these monuments of antiquity, or add any item to archaiologic research: so that all I can say must seem to be no more than a "rechauffée" of what has been infinitely better said by others — besides this, I am no draughtsman, and to convey any distinct idea of these vast architectural remains without drawings, is next to an impossibility. Without much hope of doing any justice to the subject, I may briefly state that the Throne of Jemsheed is situated

* Whether Jemsheed is entirely a fabulous character, or was a real monarch: and if the latter, at what period of antiquity he lived and reigned; are questions which cannot be satisfactorily solved.

upon an extensive terrace, at the foot of a mountain or steep rock, named the Koohi Rahmet (hill of mercy) and overlooking the wide plain of Mervdasht.

The terrace or platform, which is composed partly of the natural rock hewn down and levelled, and partly of very compact and substantial masonwork, is nearly 500 yards in length, and 312 in breadth; its height from the level of the plain, varying from 10 to 20 yards, according to the inequalities of the plain itself. This platform faces to the westward; its form is rather irregular, and the northern side is considerably broader than the southern: on the east rises the rocky mountain. The front and sides are built of huge stones, most accurately fitted together; and most of these masses of stone have been cramped together with iron for further security. A double dovetail, cut two or three inches deep, passes across the edges of two adjacent stones, and this was filled up with an iron wedge fastened in with lead. The iron has now been all picked out by the villagers and others inhabiting the plain; but remains of the lead may be seen here and there. Where any block of stone has been flawed, or had a piece inserted to make it fit exactly, the divisions have always been carefully fastened with cramps. A better piece of masonry, I think I never saw. It reminded me of the pyramids of Egypt, and is likely to last as long. The stone appears to be a kind of

marble, very hard, and of a dark gray colour. It has evidently been cut from the neighbouring rocks.

The platform is ascended on the front (the only access to its surface) by a broad staircase of dark slate-coloured marble, consisting of double flights of steps, the ascents of which face each other. The lower flights project away from each other and terminate in broad landing-places, from whence rise the upper flights, gradually approaching one another till they reach the surface of the terrace, where they are about twenty yards apart. The lower flights consist of fifty-five steps each, and the upper of forty-eight. The steps are more than seven yards in breadth; and only three inches and a half in height; rendering the ascent so gradual and easy, that one may go up stairs on horseback, without difficulty. A dozen or more steps are cut out of each block of marble, of which the staircase is formed; and the huge blocks are so artificially put together, that at first sight, the whole staircase appears to be made from one stone. Some traveller (Neibuhr if I mistake not) has pronounced these stairs to be the finest in the world; but how far the assertion may be correct, I am not prepared to say.

At a very little distance from the top of the stairs, stands an immense gateway, consisting of two very thick stone walls, thirteen feet apart and twenty-one feet long. The height of this

gateway, I believe to be full thirty feet; but the architrave or top which connected the walls, has disappeared. The fronts and inner sides of these walls are sculptured into the semblance of two gigantic animals, probably bulls, looking westward; that is to say, over the plain. These sculptures, which are in bold alto relief, are standing on pedestals nearly six feet high: their faces are completely broken away (the work of the iconoclastic Moslems no doubt) but the body resembles that of a bull. The pedestals and legs of these nondescript monsters, are nearly covered with names (some very skilfully executed with the chisel) of European visitors. Among others, I noticed those of Sir J. Malcolm, Sir J. Mac Donald, Messrs. Rich, Willock, Morier and many more — distinguished names in their way perhaps; but in my humble opinion, not tending greatly to improve the appearance of the giant warders of Jemsheed's temple-palace. I could heartily wish that both Moslem and Christian had been more merciful towards these beautiful and venerable remains.

In the interior of the walls, at some little distance above the backs of the animals, there is some inscription in the mysterious cuneiform or arrow-headed character, which the *savans* of Europe are now beginning to decypher and interpret.

Passing through this portal, a few paces to the east, we find two stately columns, seven yards

apart. The shafts of these columns are fluted; and their capitals, disproportionately large and heavy. They are said to be forty-five feet high. A very little way beyond these, stands a second gateway, similar in shape and appearance to the first; and like it, carved into the likeness of two colossal animals, turned in an opposite direction to those of the former portal, with their faces eastward, looking towards the mountain. These monsters are gifted with wings, extending over their shoulders and high above the ridge of their backs; beautifully carved, every feather seeming as perfect as if the labour of the chisel had been concluded yesterday. Their bodies resemble bulls; and their heads, which are less defaced and damaged than those of the other portal, are decidedly human. The features of the face have been broken away, but their thickly curled beards, long ringlets of hair, and ears with earrings in them, remain. Each monster wears on his head a high round cap, with a kind of wreath or coronet on the top, and a broad band at bottom. The pedestals on which they stand, are buried in earth and accumulated rubbish; but are probably lower than those of the first gate; and from his cloven hoof to the summit of his cap, each monster measures about twenty feet. Arrow-head inscriptions appear in the upper part of the inside of the gateway. The stone of which these portals and columns are composed, seems to be a light-coloured marble; and the floor of this entrance

to the temple-palace, has been paved with immense slabs of the same: but very little of the pavement is visible, a stratum of earth and debris having accumulated over it. The four monsters which I have just mentioned, appear very similar to the human-headed and winged animals represented in Mr. Layard's work on the remains of Nineveh. In the opinion of that enterprizing gentleman, the Persians anciently obtained their religion and arts from the Assyrians; and the design of the monster bulls of Persepolis has consequently been borrowed from the sculptors of Nimroud and Khorsabâd. I shall not venture to contradict this opinion, which for aught I know may be perfectly correct; but it seems to me that the architectural taste and fancy of ancient Persia, are much akin to those of Egypt, and may have been thence derived. Cambyses, we are informed, carried off from Thebes the finest embellishments of that city, together with a vast number of captives; and it is not impossible that the ornaments of Persepolis may have been formed by the hands of Egyptian sculptors, accustomed to execute such work on a grand scale.

The surface of the platform is very uneven, the greater part of it being covered, to a greater or less depth, with soil deposited by the disintegration of the rock behind it; the debris mingling with the fallen stones and fragments of the ruins.

Several smaller terraces stand upon this platform, which I shall presently mention.

Southward of the two portals, at a distance of fifty-four yards, lies the magnificent hall or terrace of columns; from which the ruins have derived their name of *chihl minár*. This hall stands upon a terrace, the front of which is seventy-two yards broad and nine feet high, approached by a double staircase standing out from the terrace. The steps of these stairs are very low, like those of the great staircase already described, being not more than three or four inches high, and sixteen feet broad.* Two flights lead up in the centre of the front, which faces due north; and two other flights lie a few yards on either side. The entire front of the terrace, on both sides of the stairs, is covered with curious and beautiful sculpture in relief, representing processions of human figures, and other objects. To the right hand, or west of the staircase, there are three rows of figures in procession, each figure being about twenty inches high. What they are intended to represent, I will not presume to guess. The upper row is damaged, and one half of the figures cut off above the middle. In the centre row, there is a band of men, leading others

* The steps are said to be thirty-two in number, to each stair: but I could not reckon as many; some of the lower steps of every flight being buried in earth. The terrace is actually nine feet high; but in many places it is now scarcely five feet above the ground.

(captives probably) along by the hands; several individuals bearing shields and lances, and some conducting a horse, a bullock, and a ram. In the lower row there are many more human figures with a camel and a chariot. I have previously mentioned, if I remember right, that there are now no wheeled vehicles in Persia. The old fire-worshipping Eerânees seem to have been better provided. This chariot is small but well formed; and the wheel, unlike the clumsy wooden wheels all in one piece, so common in India, has a nave with twelve spokes, and a tyre on the outside of the felloe. The horses drawing it are rather disproportionately small, and a man conducts them, with his arms thrown over their necks. At the angle at the extremity of the rows, there is a large sculpture, very spiritedly executed, of a lion seizing upon an outlandish-looking bull. On the left hand or east side of the stair, there are very similar rows of figures; but the lower row is nearly hidden in the earth which has gathered round it. Here may be seen a procession of priests apparently, in long robes, with rods in their hands; warriors with bows and quivers, and many others whose nature and occupation it would be difficult to make out. At the end there is another large representation of the lion and bull. The costume of the different figures, varies greatly. Some are in long robes and others in short tunics: some wear high pointed caps, and others round bonnets flat on

top and plaited or fluted around: some have sandals or buskins on their feet, and others appear to be barefooted. Just under the landing-place of the central stairs, there are seven figures as large as life, attired in long robes, with flat-topped caps fluted round, upon their heads. They have lances in their hands, and three of them carry huge shields, shaped like the body or sounding-board of a fiddle, while the other four are armed with bows and quivers.

The hall of columns is about 127 yards long (*i. e.* from east to west) and 118 broad, from north to south. It once contained a magnificent group of stupendous pillars of marble, arranged in colonnades, seventy-two in number; of which only thirteen are now standing erect*—the deforming hand of Time, aided by occasional earthquakes, having overthrown all the others. These columns were evidently arranged in a centre group of thirty-six (six columns deep and broad) having at a little distance, in front and on both sides, ranges of pillars in double rows of six in each row. Between the front double row near the stairs, and the centre group, there seems to have been a gateway built of large masses of stone, which now lie in a confused heap. The

* The first European, I believe, who gave any account of the ruins of Persepolis, was Pietro Della Vallé, who visited this place in 1621. In his time, twenty-five pillars were standing. When Morier visited it in 1809, sixteen were standing.

terrace is covered with heaps of sculptured ruins; shafts, pedestals and capitals; marble fragments of every kind, lying in all directions, half buried in accumulated dust and rubbish.

The columns are each from fifty-five to sixty feet in height, and sixteen feet three inches in circumference, measuring round the shaft. They belong to no recognized order of architecture. Every shaft is fluted, and the pedestals of all, are cut in the form of a lotus-flower inverted; but the capitals are of two very different descriptions. The centre group, the pillars of which are fifty-five feet high, and evidently stood twenty-five feet apart from each other, have long and heavy capitals, occupying nearly half the length of the pillar, and imparting a clumsy appearance. These capitals are quadrangular and fluted, with circular fillets and abaci. The exterior ranges consisted of columns sixty feet high, having by way of a capital, a figure of a double demi-bull—that is to say, the head, breast and forelegs, doubled up in sitting posture, of two bulls, joined together at the trunk and looking in opposite directions. Of this style of capital, only one—or rather half a one, for it is sadly broken—remains, and it is so very nearly off the centre of gravity, that the next shock of an earthquake, however slight, will probably bring it down. As I was measuring the circumference of the pillar on which it stands, I felt half apprehensive of its coming down upon my head. None of the few columns remaining

erect, are quite perfect; the capitals of all are more or less damaged, and some entirely gone. Whether these columns supported a roof, or not, is a matter that cannot be ascertained. No vestige of a roof now remains; but we can hardly suppose that so many huge pillars stood together, without upholding some kind of superstructure to defend the hall from the sun and rain.

A little south of the hall of columns, there is a smaller terrace, raised five or six feet above the level of the former, and approached by a broken flight of steps. Upon this are the ruins of a square building, entered by several doorways, and containing besides, numerous window-frames and recesses, in tolerably perfect preservation. The quadrangle is about 60 yards long by 32 broad. The window-frames and most of the doors are of hard black marble, polished bright like a mirror; and the building seems to have been divided into three apartments, the doors being six in number. Here are numerous sculptures in relief. On one side is an inscription in the arrowhead character, and various figures, nearly smothered in debris and soil. Within, there is a figure of a monarch, with attendants following him carrying a fly-flap and an umbrella. The king is dressed in long robes, and has in his hand something like a dice-box. His hair is arranged in masses of curls, and his cap is perforated with numerous small holes, apparently for nails to fasten a covering of thin gold or some other substance upon it.

His features have been broken away. There are also effigies of guards with long spears; and a representation of a combat between a man and a monstrous unicorn. The man is dressed in a long garment, with a cap or helmet on his head: his arms are bare, and his hair and beard in thick clusters of curls. He is thrusting his sword into the belly of the rampant monster, while with his left hand, he grasps its single horn. The unicorn stands upright on its hind legs, and its fore paws rest on the chest and shoulder of its human antagonist. Round the borders of some of the recesses and window-frames are arrowhead inscriptions; and sundry more recently carved names of Moslem and Christian visitors. On one side of the terrace stands a low pillar, bearing a long inscription in the mysterious arrowhead; and on the opposite side, is the broken stump of a corresponding pillar. The face of the dilapidated staircase presents figures of guards as large as life, and a repetition of the lion seizing the bull.

Proceeding a little way still southward, we came to another terrace, near the extremity of the platform. It is 33 yards square, and covered with heaps of ruins. A number of pillars must have stood here, ranged in two colonnades; for their broken bases are visible among the fallen rubbish. The building (whatever it may have been intended for) seems to have been divided into several small apartments, of which sundry

doorways and window-frames of gray marble are still standing. These are ornamented with sculpture in relief: the king with his attendants carrying the fly-flap and umbrella appear again; with certain personages, probably meant for priests, bearing censers and bowls. The countenances of all of these figures, are effaced; which, I regret to say, is the case with nearly all of the larger human effigies throughout these ruins — a piece of barbarous mischief, for which the rude Arab conquerors of the country may probably be thanked. The smaller figures have better escaped this mutilation. I may likewise observe that most of the large blocks of stone, employed in the various groups of building, are roughly hollowed out on the side opposite to the carved or visible side, with a view, no doubt, of rendering them lighter for carriage.

Turning to the east, towards the centre of the platform, we found two large doorways standing amid the crumbled remains of the edifice to which they belonged. At one doorway, are bas-reliefs of kings seated on chairs; and at the other, are the monarchs with their umbrella-bearers. Above their heads are representations of that mysterious figure — a winged man, without legs, encompassed with a circle — regarding the precise nature of which, antiquaries are not agreed. By Mr. Layard's account, it would seem that this singular object must have been as common to the old Assyrian mythology, as to the Per-

sian; and it appears very similar to the winged globe (the emblem of life and eternity) of ancient Egypt. It is generally supposed to represent the *ferooher* or vivifying principle and spiritual image, which, like a guardian angel, attended on every man through life.*

Eastward of this, lie the remains of another edifice half covered with a deep layer of earth. The sculptured figures on the gateway are buried nearly to the shoulders: these represent guards with spears in their hands; the king and umbrella-bearer repeated, and several repetitions of the combat between the man and monstrous unicorn. Two square pilasters stand on the north side of this group; which being near the skirt of the rock, is more concealed by debris than any other ruins upon the platform.

Turning northwards, we reached a fine quadrangle of building enclosing a space of seventy yards square. Eight lofty doorways give access to the interior — two on each side — but those on the north side are higher and wider than the others. Between each gateway, are three recesses or niches, all built of solid stonework; but more or less dilapidated. The interior is ornamented with a great variety of bas-relief sculpture. The

* The term *ferooher* is quite obsolete in modern Persian. The only explanation of it given in the Boorhâni Kâtia, or "convincing proof," the best lexicon the Persians have, is that it signifies *jowher* (matter or essence) in contradistinction to *araz* (accident or quality not essential).

combat of the man and unicorn so frequently depicted, may here be seen on a gigantic scale. The attitude is always the same, but the figure of the monster unicorn is of various kinds. It has sometimes the body and paws of a lion, with huge wings lying close to the back and sides, and a nondescript head, unlike that of any animal in particular. In other places, it is represented with the head and beak of a vulture, and the body of a quadruped; and in others, with the body and hoofs of a bull. It has always a single horn projecting from its forehead, which the man grasps with his left hand. The figure of the man is in every case the same: he stands erect, in a very cool and unconcerned manner, and pokes his sword into the monster's stomach, while he holds it by the horn. His features have everywhere been effaced.

Two of the gateways bear very fine representations of the king seated in state, in the higher compartment, and several rows of figures ranged beneath. This is frequently repeated in different places. In some, the monarch is seated on a chair, his feet resting on a footstool, with a long staff in his hand, and an attendant standing behind him, waving a flyflap over his head. The dress of the king is a long robe and a high round cap, flat on the top: that of the attendant is very similar, but his cap is of a long jellybag shape, hanging backwards and fastened with a band under the chin. The king has a curled bushy

wig and beard; while the attendant seems to be young and beardless. The ledge or platform upon which the above-mentioned are placed, appears to be upheld by four individuals on a lower row, with their hands uplifted; while the ledge on which they stand, is sustained by a third row of five individuals, and that by a still lower row, all with their hands raised as if upholding those standing above their heads. Over the head of the king, is a sort of canopy, with fringes and small tassels, surmounted by two small rows of animals, apparently bulls and lions; and the *ferooher* or winged figure in the circle, above all.* The sides of this pyramid of figures resemble columns terminating in huge lions' paws, resting on a high pedestal of inverted lotus-flowers.

On the north gateway, this group or column of figures is represented on a more perfect scale. The king in his chair and his attendant with the flyflap are much the same as before. He has a long staff in one hand, and a lotus-flower in the other; while behind stand two more attendants with a spear, a bow and other weapons. In front of the chair are two censers like pepper-castors, with small chains connecting the tops with the lower portions. Two persons advance towards the king, the foremost making an obeisance, with his hand raised to his head. Beneath

* On the broad frieze of ornamental work, between the king and the ferooher, may be seen the winged globe, the well-known Egyptian symbol of eternity.

stand five rows of armed men; every row being separated from the upper and lower ranges by a border decorated with roses; and a margin of roses surrounds the whole. The ancient Persians appear to have used chairs as civilized nations do: the moderns have acquired the dog-like habit of grovelling on the ground, since they adopted the religion of the impostor of Mecca. The armed men filling the five rows under the sovereign and his attendants, are furnished with a variety of costumes and weapons. There are generally ten figures in each row. Of these, some are dressed in round caps and close-fitting tunics, while others have wide-sleeved gowns reaching nearly to the feet, and fluted bonnets flat on the crown. Most carry spears, as well as bows and quivers; and some have the fiddle-shaped shields, which I have before remarked. Their swords are short and straight like Roman faulchions; and the quivers fasten with a loop and string. The carving is minute and beautiful; and fortunately still very perfect.

Among all of the many hundreds of figures embellishing the ruins upon Jemsheed's throne, I did not observe a single one representing a female.*

Persians entertain our, not very praiseworthy, custom of writing their names in remarkable places which they may happen to visit: but the

* The aggregate number of figures of all sizes, human and bestial included, has been estimated at 1300.

Persian usually accompanies his autograph with a verse or two of poetry, of his own or anybody else's composition. In the nooks and recesses of this quadrangle, I observed sundry metrical effusions, illustrative of the vanity of human ambition, in connexion with these large structures; and copied one quatrain—an original no doubt, in rather halting metre—which runs thus—

آن کاخ که برچرخ همي زد پهلو
شا هان همه بردرش نهادند رو
دیدم که برکنکرۀ اش فاختهٔ
نشسته و میکفت که کوکوکو

"Behold that proud temple, that once reared its crest to the heavens. Kings and princes came hither to rub their foreheads upon its threshold. On its highest pinnacle I saw a ringdove perched, and she sang out *coo, coo, coo* (i.e.—'where, where are they'?)"

The writer, though no great poet, is right in his sentiment. The builders of the palace-temple of Persepolis were doubtless influenced, like the Pharaohs who erected the pyramids, by a vain ambition and delusive hope of terrestrial immortality; and if events always turned out as human judgment proposes they should, the memory of these princes would co-exist with their beautiful works: but the hopes of man are rarely realized, and their names, and the period when they lived, are alike forgotten.

In the same recess, another visitor had transcribed an apposite couplet from Hâfiz—

هر که را خوابگه آخر بدو مشتي خاکست
گو چه حاجت که بر افلاک کشي ايوان را

"The final resting-place of everyone is a handful or two of earth: say then where is the use of building stately mansions, lofty as the skies.*

A little way northward of the quadrangle, lies a mass of blocks of stone, apparently the ruins of a large gateway, among which may be discovered the remains of a colossal monster, evidently of the same breed as the gigantic bulls at the entrance of the palace-temple, and the fragments of two or more pillars. The cylindrical stones composing a pillar, have all a hole in the centre, apparently to admit an iron wedge, to connect them together more firmly.

Directing our steps towards the great entrance, we saw, not far from the winged bulls, a stone tank or cistern, hollowed out from a single mass of stone, perhaps a projection of the rock itself. It is about six yards square, but being nearly

* "Tu secanda marmora
Locas sub ipsum funus; et sepulchri
Immemor, struis domos." — Horace.

"Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? Thou lookest from thy towers to-day: yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes; it howls in thy empty court."
Ossian.

filled with earth, we could not judge of its depth.

In several parts of the surface of the platform, there are the entrances to subterranean passages, cut in the rock, and leading in different directions. These were probably aqueducts. I had not the curiosity to crawl into any of these underground vaults, being assured that there is nothing to be seen in them; and we were, besides, unprovided with candles or light of any kind.

We next went to inspect the tombs of the kings (as they had been pronounced to be) in the brow of the Koohi Rahmet, the hill or rather rock, rising over the platform on the east side. I believe that there exists no doubt as to these sculptured vaults having been the resting-places of ancient Persian kings; who, though fire-worshippers, used to be interred when deceased; a custom quite contrary to the practice of the ignicolists of the present day, who, as is well known, expose their dead in open towers to be torn to pieces by the vultures and crows.

These tombs, of which there are two, are cut in the face of the rock, at a considerable elevation, and about 300 yards distant from the platform itself. They are easy of access, the slope of the hill, at the skirt, being very gradual. I observed many porcupine quills strewed about the foot of the hill; and was told that the "thorny-back," as the Persians name the animal,

burrows hereabouts in numbers. The Persian peasants hold the same fabulous notion regarding the porcupine, which is, or used to be, received among us — that it possesses the power of shooting or darting its quills at its pursuers.

We first inspected the tomb lying to the northward. A deep recess or niche is excavated in the face of the rock, 24 yards broad, and, I believe, 43 yards high; in the centre of the lower portion of which, is a doorway filled up with a slab of stone, part of which has been broken out, giving access to the interior. The doorway is surrounded with a border of roses, and has an architrave above it, presenting three rows of perpendicular flutes. Four pilasters in high relief rise from the floor, two on each side of the doorway, with capitals of the double demi-bull, which appear to support solid beams, sustaining the entire upper portion of the sculpture. On either side, outside of the pillars, are figures of men in long robes carrying spears. Above the pillars rests an entablature, comprising an architrave of crenated relief, like a battlement; a frieze containing a row of eighteen lions; and a plain cornice. Over the entablature, the recess in the rock narrows considerably; and here there is a kind of platform or oblong pedestal, resembling a large chest, ornamented with two rows of human figures, and having at each end, a demi-unicorn. Upon this pedestal is an altar with a fire blazing upon it; and before the altar, stands a person (whether

meant for king or priest it would be difficult to say) having a bow in one hand, its end resting on the floor, and extending the other hand towards the altar, as if worshipping the fire. Above the man and altar, but midway between both, hovers the Ferooher or spiritual prototype of the former. In appearance it resembles its human type, but is without legs; the body from the hips upwards, rising out of a circle, on either side of which extend wings. The Ferooher was considered part of every man's soul, and united therewith before birth and after death. A little behind the altar, and above it, is a circular figure representing the sun.

The inside of this tomb was filled with sand and rubbish, nearly to the top of the broken entrance, so that we found it impossible to get into the interior.

The other tomb, lying a little way to the southward, is so very similar to that which I have just described, that any particular account of it would be superfluous. The sculpture of both is nearly the same, and like that of the ruins on the platform, in low relief. The second tomb was, however, not choaked up like the first; and on entering it, we found ourselves in a vault, eleven paces in length, and I should think nearly twelve feet high. At one end, there are three niches, arched over, each containing a hollow, in which, probably, a body was laid; but they are now quite empty.

Away to the southward, at some distance from the second tomb, is a third, in an imperfect state. The recess has been cut out in the rock, but the sculpture left incomplete. We did not go up to it.

At the foot of the rock, near the tombs, I observed one or two cisterns for water, similar to the one on the platform near the great entrance.

It is doubtful when the worship of fire became the national religion of Persia. It is probable that Jemsheed (supposing that such a personage existed) and the early sovereigns of the country held the Sabæan or Chaldean religion, in which one God was worshipped together with the "host of heaven" — i.e. the sun, moon and stars; this being the oldest corruption of the faith imparted to man by his Maker, known. Zerdusht or Zertoosht, whom we call Zoroaster, has generally been considered the founder of fire-worship; but who he was, whether a Persian, a Chaldean or an Egyptian, and when he lived, are points which cannot be ascertained. He is mentioned by many ancient historians, European and Asiatic, as having existed in different times and countries; and it is probable that the name was borne by more than one person. According to Persian tradition, fire-worship originated in the days of Hooshung the second Peeshdâdee king, who is supposed to have lived at a very indefinite period of antiquity. This monarch, while killing a dragon with stones,

accidentally struck fire from a flinty rock, and a flame burst forth, which he straightway adored as a divine emanation. Zerdusht or Zoroaster, according to these traditions, appeared in the reign of Gushtasp (supposed to be Darius Hystaspes, who lived about five centuries before our Saviour's time) and propagated the form of doctrine held by the Guebres of this country and the Parsees of India, up to the present day.

The modern Persians believe the old Guebre warriors of Eerân to have been men of great stature and prowess. There exists a strong disposition among most persons, to contrast the present with past ages; and to regard the latter as very superior to the former in heroism, strength and manly virtues. We all think ourselves the cleverest and most learned folks that ever existed; but we are apt to consider our forefathers as far our superiors in stern virtue, courage and bodily strength. What old veteran, from Nestor in the Iliad down to some time-worn Chelsea pensioner who has seen Talavera and Waterloo, would admit that the fighting men of the present day are at all to be compared with those who warred and conquered in the days of his youthful prime? And by a parity of reasoning, our professors of religion may be very well in their way, as far as learning and teaching go, but what are they to the martyrs of old, from apostolic times down to Bothwell Brigg, who threw away their lives and shed their blood like water, to uphold the good

cause? The argument is as fallacious and absurd, as many other old prejudices. If our church and army do not exhibit the heroism of former days, it is simply because they are not called upon to do so; but to suppose their character to be deteriorated, is as unjust as it is untrue. Greek historians have represented the old Persians as effeminate and unwarlike; but this is no more than an unworthy exaltation of themselves at their foe's expense. Like the modern, they were probably fond of pleasure and debauchery, but unwarlike they certainly were not. The Greeks have overshot their mark in thus calumniating them: for if the Persians were such as they assert, they had the less merit in successfully resisting them. It is remarkable that, according to traditions, preserved in the Shah Nameh and some other works, the people of Persia were divided by Jemsheed into four classes or castes — the *katoozee* or priests — the *nesáree* or warriors — the *nasoodee* or cultivators — and the *anokhooshee* or handicraftsmen. This goes far in favour of the opinion entertained by Sir William Jones and many others, that Brahminism came originally into India from this country.

We now took our departure from Jemsheed's throne, and proceeded to view the other remarkable remains on the adjacent plain. Turning our course to the north-west, at the distance of little more than half a mile from the Takht, we came

to a gateway, precisely similar to those at the Takhti Aboo Nasser near Sheerauz: consisting of stone jambs with a lintel over their tops. Within the portal are figures in low relief, of priests in long robes, carrying censers or something of the kind, in their hands. Near this spot, a party of Eeliautees had pitched their black tents.

About two miles further on in the same direction, we were guided to a nook or recess in the corner of a rock, which we might otherwise have passed a dozen times without noticing. The recess contains sculptures in relief, known by the appellation of Nakshi Rejeb. The groups of sculpture are three in number; one facing the entrance, and one on each side. That opposite to the entrance contains two royal personages of colossal size standing face to face, and grasping with their right hands, a large ring, the emblem of peace. Both are clad in long robes; and one, who turns his right side to the spectator, wears a globe or football upon his head—the crown of the Sassanian kings—while the other has a three-plumed cap, and carries a club or sceptre in his left hand. Between the two, are two diminutive figures like little children: these are nearly obliterated; and it is hard to say what they are intended to represent. Behind the Sassanian monarch, stand two figures, also colossal; one of whom, a young beardless man, waves a flyflap over his head; and the other, apparently an old

man with a long beard, holds up his finger as if enjoining silence. Behind the other, who is probably an Arsacidan king, are three beardless persons, women perhaps or youths, looking in the opposite direction. All these figures, except the two diminutive ones, are fully nine feet high; and have been considerably damaged and disfigured, more by manual violence than by time.

To the right of the entrance, is a representation of two personages, probably kings, on horseback, a little larger than life; one of whom holds out a circle to the other. It is very similar to one of the sculptures at Shapoor, but on a smaller scale.

On the left of the entrance is the largest tablet, containing the figure of a king on horseback, with nine followers on foot. The monarch, who is evidently a Sassanian by his football-topped crown*, is of gigantic size, and his figure is tolerably distinct, although his features have been broken away. He wears a long flowing dress, with a cuirass and belt. His horse is handsomely caparisoned, but its head is sadly damaged. The nine attendants are all attired alike, in long tunics, round caps, belts and long straight swords, on the hilts of which their hands rest. They stand upwards of eight feet high;

* The Sassanian king is always represented with a balloon or football upon his head; and his hair in huge bushes of curls. The Arsacidan king usually wears an open coronet, and has his hair and beard in long, crisp, tightly twisted ringlets.

and the king, if dismounted and standing erect, would be nine or ten feet in height. On the breast of the horse is a Greek inscription, now illegible. The Greek language was, probably, a common medium of intercourse, in this as in other eastern countries, in the time of the Seleucide and Arsacide princes. After the death of Alexander the Great, Seleucus made himself master of Persia and the adjacent countries, about B.C. 312; which he and his successors, named the Seleucidæ, held for sixty years, when they were expelled by Ashk or Arsaces the Parthian, who established a dynasty of his own. The Ashkânee (Arsacidan or Parthian) kings held the sovereignty of Persia, till Ardesheer Bâbekân the descendant of Sassan, having stirred up his Persian countrymen to recover their independence, drove out the Parthians after a long and severe struggle, and founded a dynasty (A.D. 229) which lasted till the Moslem conquest. A Grecian empire was founded in Bactria (now Khorassan) about B.C. 260; and continued for 130 years; after which, it was subverted and utterly annihilated by the Scythian or Tartar hordes.* The Greek kings of Bactria carried on an extensive trade with India.

Leaving the Nakshi Rejeb, we forded the Polvâr river, which the people also call the river of

* Scarcely any record remains of the Grecian rulers of Bactria. Asiatic as well as European historians have been remarkably sparing of information regarding them.

Seevund and the river of Moorgaub, from two places by which it passes; and in consequence of the numerous watercourses traversing the plain in every direction, were obliged to make a long detour in order to reach the tombs and sculptures of Nakshi Rustam. The distance, as the crow flies, from Nakshi Rejeb to Nakshi Rustam, cannot, I should think, be more than three miles; but by the circuitous route we were obliged to take, we went at least five. Midway we passed a large village named ZengâbâAd, surrounded with a low mud wall, and having attached to it an orchard and a plantation of stunted *seffeedârs*, now quite leafless, and looking like broomsticks set up on end. A little further off, is another large village called Hoseinâbâd. The greater part of this plain was, probably, anciently covered with the city of Persepolis.

The sculptures of Nakshi Rustam are cut from the face of a steep range of marbly rocks, named the Koohi Hosein, extending from north-west to south-east; and occupy a space of two hundred yards. At an elevation of about forty feet from the ground, are four tombs of ancient Persian kings, cut in the perpendicular face of the rock, similar to those I have described at the Takhti Jemsheed, and about forty yards apart from each other. These tombs are so much the same as those already mentioned, that no particular description of them need be given. They have all an open doorway, flanked by pilasters, two on

each side, having capitals of the double demi-bull; and above the entablature, is the chest-like platform, ornamented with two rows of human figures, and the monster's head and paws at the corners, supporting the fire-altar and figure with a bow in hand worshipping, above which is the Ferooher and round globe of the sun. Within the sides of the recess, are figures standing, two and two, above each other in rows. Beneath each doorway, the rock is smoothed perpendicularly, forming a broad tablet. Under the range of these tombs, are numerous tablets, on a level with, or just above the ground, presenting a variety of sculpture in bas-relief. The first of these tablets, to the right hand of the spectator facing the rock, contains three gigantic figures on foot; one representing a Sassanian king with his globe-topped crown, holding forth a circle, which the next figure, apparently a female, also grasps with one hand. Behind the king stands the third figure in a high-peaked cap, with the right hand elevated.*

Beyond this, and beneath the second tomb to the westward, are two tablets, one above the other, each containing figures of horsemen tilting with lances, unfortunately much obliterated. One cavalier, in the less defaced tablet of the two, wears a globe-topped helmet, and has a quiver at his

* It is hardly needful to observe that these sculptures, as well as those at Nakshi Rejeb, are comparatively recent, and were probably executed in the third century after Christ.

side; but the figure of his antagonist is so much effaced that his costume cannot be made out. The horses of both are at full gallop. Just beyond this, moving westward, is a large tablet bearing a representation of the submission of Valerian to Shapoor, somewhat similar to that at Shapoor, but on colossal scale. The tablet contains four figures, the principal of which is Shapoor on horseback, wearing a crown with a globe upon it; and seizing the hands of an individual standing upright: while before him kneels Valerian clad in a Roman tunic and cloak fastened with a fibula upon the shoulder. The fourth figure stands behind the horse, his head and shoulders only are visible, and his right hand points upwards. Beneath the bust of this last figure, is a long inscription, in what I suppose to be Pehlivee or ancient Persian; and under the horse's belly is an illegible inscription in Greek. The length of this tablet is nearly forty feet.

The next tomb has no tablet below it; but beneath the fourth and last tomb, there is a very spirited sculpture, representing a joust between two cavaliers, who have met in full tilt. The horseman to the left of the spectator, wears a curious triple helmet in three large peaks, terminating in balls like oranges: his body seems to be encased in scale armour, and a quiver hangs on his right side. His horse is going at full speed "ventre à terre," and he has run his lance through the neck of his opponent; whose horse

is thrown back on its haunches, while his lance is shivered on the breastplate of his more fortunate enemy. This second cavalier wears a singular helmet with a knobbed peak. Behind the victorious horseman, is a figure on foot bearing a standard consisting of three balls on a crossbar at the top of a pole; not unlike a pawnbroker's sign.

A little way beyond this, and round the face of a projecting piece of rock, is a tablet containing nine figures. In the centre stands a Sassanian monarch, at full length, leaning on his sword. The other figures, five on one side and three on the other, are partly concealed by a kind of parapet reaching up to their waists, which opens at the spot where the king is standing.

Just beside, is a large tablet, similar to one at Shapoor, presenting two gigantic figures on horseback meeting. The one to the right hand is evidently an Arsacide king, and wears a mural crown surrounding a low cap; his beard is cut square, and in his left hand he bears a club; while with his right, he holds forth a circle to the other. The second figure is a Sassanian monarch, wearing a balloon-topped crown and necklace, and having a round cut beard. His left hand is raised to his face; and his right stretched forth to take hold of the circle held out to him. Both kings are clad in long garments; and their horses are gaily caparisoned. A dead person lies under the feet of each horse; and

behind the Sassanian king, stands a beardless attendant on foot with a flyflap. From each horse hangs a large mass, like a cabbage, suspended by chains: this is evidently an ornament of some sort, but of what nature it is impossible to determine. This last tablet is about twenty-two feet in length.

On the summit of the rock above, stands a round stump of a pillar, six feet high; and here the range terminates suddenly, and branches off to the eastward.

On the front of the rocks where these sculptures are cut, there are numerous inscriptions in the arrow-headed character, Pehlivee, Greek, and Arabic. The sculptures are much worn and effaced, and none of them have been as neatly cut as some at Shapoor. The relative proportions of the objects represented, are not generally well preserved; and the horses are mostly too small for their riders. The rocks appear to be composed of a whitish-gray kind of marble.

Directly in front of the tombs, and at the distance of a few paces from the face of the rock, stands a very singular compact building, constructed of huge slabs and blocks of white marble; which goes by the name of the *kaaba,e zerdoosht* or "temple of Zoroaster," and was probably a fire-temple of the Magian priests. It is of quadrangular form, twenty-five feet square, and about thirty-five feet high. The only entrance is by a doorway, facing the rock, which is

six feet in height and nearly five in width. The walls of this curious edifice are nearly six feet thick, so that the interior, a single chamber, is not much more than twelve feet square, by sixteen or eighteen high. The flat roof consists of two large slabs; and the architrave over the door is a single slab twenty-two feet long. The interior is quite empty, and contains no sculpture or ornament. On each side of the exterior are four false windows of black marble; and numerous small indentations, of oblong quadrangular form. This remarkable building looks wonderfully new and fresh: from the great solidity of its structure, it has continued entire during, I know not how many centuries.

We wished much to enter one of the tombs, but were unprovided with any ladder or other means of ascent; for as I have already observed, they are all at a height of some forty feet from the ground. We were consequently compelled to leave them unexplored, and to comfort ourselves with the reflection that others who have succeeded in examining them, have reported that there is nothing to be seen within.

Why these sculptures should be named after Rustam, the Hercules of Persia, it would be difficult to say, as no representation of this hero occurs in any of them; unless the people suppose every figure of a warrior to be intended for Rustam, as every king is taken for Jemsheed. Pictures of the hero of Eerân, whose doughty

deeds are sung in the Shah Nameh, are very common in the ornamented chambers of palaces and private houses; where he is usually represented in his leopard-skin coat, and helmet made from the head of the terrible White Dæmon whom he slew in single combat, mounted on his gigantic steed; and with his bull-headed mace in his grasp, dealing destruction on all around. The character of Rustam is, perhaps, not entirely fabulous. For my part, I incline to believe that most of the, so called fabulous, heroes of antiquity, are not mere mythical beings, but were real living men, in times when the only acknowledged virtue was brute strength and courage, and man's greatest merit consisted in a well exercised ability to crush and destroy his fellow-creatures. Their deeds were exaggerated and magnified by vulgar report; and the genius of the poets has thrown a magic charm round their names, attributing to them all manner of fabulous adventures and actions; but with all this, it is not improbable that Hercules of Greece, Rama of Hindostan, Rustam of Persia—were actual living beings, extolled by romantic legend and heroic verse into prodigies and demigods.

As we rode back in the evening, we found the plain moist and muddy, the ice having been entirely melted by the sun during the day. On the north-west side of the plain of Mervdasht, at a distance of ten miles or more from Jemsheed's throne, are three insulated hills, collectively

termed the *sih goombedán* or "three domes," and respectively named, as our guide informed us, Istakhar, Shahrek, and Kom-feerooz. Fraser calls them Istakhar, Shekusteh and Shemgan— on the summits of which, are said to be remains of ancient fortresses.

The people here attribute the ravages of locusts, which of late years have proved destructive to their crops, to the fact of several slabs of inscription in the arrow-head character having been carried off from the ruins by European savans. These mysterious writings they regard as talismans averting evil. They commonly call them *genj nameh* or "tales of treasure," supposing that they divulge the hiding-places of long concealed riches, on which account, travellers from Feringistan are so anxious to decypher them. The labours of Grotefend, Lassen, Westergaard and Rawlinson have at length been crowned with success, and a key has been discovered to unlock the mysteries of these long unknown inscriptions: Major Rawlinson, in particular, has lately been very successful in interpreting them. The cuneiform or arrow-headed character has been classed into three different kinds, the Assyrian or Babylonian, the Median, and the Persian. The language written in the latter, is for the most part Sanskrit, another argument in favour of the supposition that the Brahminical system of India came originally from Persia. The knowledge of these ancient dialects

is still in its infancy; the wonder is that anything has been made out at all. The arrow-head character is supposed to have fallen into disuse, about four centuries previous to our Saviour's advent.

It is recorded that Shah Suffee, the successor of Abbas the Great, having become suspicious of European travellers' love of visiting these ruins of ancient grandeur, a passion which Asiatics can in no way comprehend, resolved on destroying them; and actually did destroy many fine ruins on the plain of Mervdasht. It is fortunate that so much has escaped his barbarous design; but who can tell what damage he may have caused?

Some visitors have been charmed, and others disappointed with the remains of Persepolis. For my own part, I will not say that I experienced any particular surprise or disappointment; but I candidly admit, that had I never visited Thebes and Dendera, I should probably have better appreciated these ruins. The antiquities of Persia are but small affairs in comparison with those of Egypt. The description I have attempted to give, is I am well aware, a very superficial and imperfect one. To describe them satisfactorily would require an amount of architectural and antiquarian knowledge, which I do not possess; and drawings are besides necessary. The best and fullest account, I believe to be that of Sir Robert Kerr Porter, but I have never had the fortune to see his elaborate work. That of

Sir William Ouseley, I recollect seeing many years ago, but I was unable to procure the work at Bombay. Morier's account is good, but rather too concise, and he has given but few drawings of the Persepolitan remains. The prints in Chardin's excellent travels convey a very good general idea of the ruins, but they are roughly done, and not always accurate in details.

Here I parted with Mr. G., who returned to Sheerauz, leaving me to pursue my journey to Ispahan.

On the following morning I left Kinaureh; the *kedkhoda* sending along with me a guide, to point out some remarkable objects which I had not previously seen. Crossing the plain, a little to the north of Jemsheed's throne, we passed a large and very conspicuous brick building, called the *tâlâr* or hall, which was erected by Sheikh Alee Khan the brother of Kureem Khan. It is two stories high, open from front to rear, in large Saracenic arches; and having been long untenanted, except by some chance wayfarer, is going fast to decay. There was formerly a fine garden here, which has entirely disappeared. About a mile and a half beyond this, and nearly opposite to the Nakshi Rejeb, is a singular platform of white marble, which goes by the name of the Takhti Tâ,oos or "Peacock's throne." It is fully thirty-six feet square, and about seven feet high, entirely composed of great blocks of marble, disposed in two layers or stages, the

lower layer projecting nearly two feet beyond the upper, on every side. Each block, which is ten feet long, has a border or moulding, two inches broad, round its edges; and many of the masses exhibit dovetailed grooves and rivet-holes for iron cramps, but the iron has all been extracted. The upper surface is level, and the platform is evidently perfectly solid. What it can have been intended for, I cannot presume to decide; but it is not unlikely that it may have sustained a fire-altar or temple, of which no trace now remains. My guide imparted to me a veracious piece of information, to the effect that last year, a wedge of pure gold, weighing seven *mans*, had been dug out of this platform! No sign of any attempt at excavation was, however, visible in any part of it.

Before leaving the plain of Persepolis, I was anxious to procure, if possible, some ancient coins or other relics; such things being frequently found hereabouts. None were to be had at Kinaureh, but some villagers of Hoseinâbâd and Zengâbâd brought me some silver and copper coins, as well as some arrow-heads, which I purchased. Coins are often turned up while ploughing, and are generally sent to Sheerauz and sold at the mint, for their value as bullion. The villagers also make them up into necklaces for their children. Among those I procured, there were one or two of Alexander the Great, but most were of the Arsacidan and Sassanian kings. The

Arsacide silver coins are much like modern *ke-roonees*, but infinitely better executed; with the monarch's head (sometimes done in a very superior manner) on one side; and on the reverse, the figure of a man seated with a bow in his hand, and an inscription in Greek. The Sassanian coins are generally larger in surface, but thinner, than the former; bearing on one side, the head of the monarch; and on the reverse, a fire-altar, with two persons standing, one on either side. On both sides of the coin, there is an inscription in Pehlivee. The Arsacide copper coins usually have the figure of an elephant, a horse, or some other animal, on the reverse of the king's portrait.

The few arrow-heads I obtained, were of two kinds, made of iron and copper; and much the same as those described by Morier in his Second Journey. The iron heads are large and flat, terminating in a long thin prong, to fit into the reed or shaft of the arrow. These are probably not older than the Moslem conquest. The copper heads are, in all likelihood, much more ancient. They are of triangular shape, like a bayonet, and are hollow from the bottom inwards, to admit of the shaft being fitted into the head.

Turning round the corner of the rocks, near the place where I had forded the river, the day before, we pursued our way due north, up the side of a valley, through which the Polvâr flows, and in half an hour, came to the remains of a

town, which the guide called Istakhar, and which was probably a suburb, or perhaps part of the city of Persepolis. Here are numerous mounds, and remains of walls and gateways; large blocks and masses of stone cumbering the ground in all directions. In the midst stands a solitary column with a capital of the double demi-bull. The shaft, which is fluted, is not more than five feet in circumference, and the whole pillar is scarcely twenty feet high. The broken remains of many similar columns, lie strewed around. After stopping for half an hour, to inspect these ruins, my guide took his leave and returned home; while I, with my servants and mules, continued the northward route up the valley, having bid adieu to all that now exists of the once great Persepolis.

The scenery on this road was to the full as ugly as any Persian landscape I have as yet beheld; and may be described as a brown sterile valley, bordered by chains of brown sterile mountains. We passed, at some distance, a large village named Seiyidoon, and then going through a pass in the mountains, came upon an open plain on the bank of the river, at the northern corner of which stood the village of Seevund, where we were to halt for the night, distant from Kinaureh about five farsakhs. Just before we reached Seevund, it began to snow heavily, and I felt glad to get under shelter.

CHAP. XXIII.

Seevund.—Persian Peasantry.—Their Expense of Living.—Mâderi Suleimân.—Pasargadae.—Abâdeh.—Yezdikhaust.—Komeisha.—Mahyar.—Arrival at Ispahan.

Seevund is a curious and picturesque place. It is situated on the slope of a stupendous wall of rocks, which rise perpendicularly above the village, to an immense height. The houses look as if standing in rows, one above another. They are, as usual, constructed with thick mud walls and flat roofs. This is a large and populous village, but a poor place. It is held in *tuyool* by the Hâjee Kowâm of Sheerauz, who, by all accounts, is none of the most lenient of masters. The people own many vineyards situated in the vicinity, for some miles round—there are none close to the village—and a great quantity of the grape-treacle, called *sheera* or *dooshaub*, is made here, but no wine.

I got a room in one of the houses, tolerably large, but low in the roof. It rained and snowed all night; and next morning as the weather cleared up, and we were preparing to start, the

muleteers reported the Polvâr river, which we had to cross, too swollen and turbulent to be forded; so that we were obliged to remain at Seevund till the following day. The *kedkhoda* (headman) and several of the elders of the village came, after I had finished breakfast, to have a talk with me. Their language was the roughest and most uncouth dialect of Persian, I had ever heard. The Sheerauzees call the patois of the villagers *kej-zubân* or "crooked speech," and a great many of the terms they made use of, are quite unintelligible to a townsman. This dialect varies greatly in different places.

The cottages of the Persian villagers and peasantry are built of mud, or rough stones cemented with mud, and mostly consist of two rooms. The walls, which are usually about seven feet high, are very thick, and full of niches and recesses, which serve as cupboards for depositing all manner of miscellaneous articles. There are generally a few small holes, by way of windows; but light and air are admitted by the door, which is commonly left open. In the middle of the floor is a small square pit, which serves for a fireplace and oven. The floor is of clay, trodden down and beaten hard; and the furniture consists of a few mats and old *nummuds.* The roof, which is flat on the top, is made of a thick layer of branches and reeds, plastered with mud and levelled on the outside: there is no ceiling in the interior, which is blackened and japanned with smoke. In

front of the cottage, there is generally a small courtyard, with a shed for cattle, surrounded with a low mud wall. The dwellings and habits of the Persian peasants, if not cleanly enough to please a fastidious eye, are certainly superior to any I have seen in other parts of the East; and I believe would even bear comparison with those of a large proportion of the peasantry of Europe.

From the *kedkhoda* I obtained the following estimate of the expenses of a peasant cultivator of the middle class, that is to say, neither well off nor absolutely poor, with a wife and two boys. In some places, where cultivators are few, and arable land abundant, a man with a single yoke or pair of oxen can sow 500 *mans* of wheat or barley, or 350 *mans* of rice. In others, where cultivators are more numerous, and there is less land to be disposed of, he can sow, perhaps not more than 100 *mans* of wheat or barley, or 70 of rice. A yoke of oxen will cost from three to five *tomâns;* and the expense of erecting his house, which he helps to build, will probably be from two to four *tomâns.* The prices of the various utensils, &c., which he requires, I have set down in English money—as follows—

Vessels of tinned copper—a *deeg* or cooking-pot—a *seenee* or large flat dish—an *aftâba* or ewer—a *lagan* or basin—a *bâdiya* or bowl—and a *piyâla* or small cup = about 30 shillings.

Earthenware vessels—a *tapoo* or immense jar for storing grain—a *kaseen* or flat dish for kneading bread—one or two earthen pots (*deezee*) for cooking—one or two small lamps

(*cherágh*) — and one or two jars (*kolook*) for containing fluids &c. = 1 shilling and sixpence.

A *tawwa* or flat iron girdle for baking bread = 2 shillings.

A *dâs* or reaping-hook = 8 pence.

A *chákoo* or common knife = 4 pence.

A *beel* or large spade with a very long handle = 2*s*. 6*d*.

A plough (*kheesh*) with iron share, harness &c. = 10*s*.

A *peeta* or heavy flat board for levelling the ground after sowing, drawn by oxen = 2*s*.

A *shishper* or iron-headed staff = 6*d*.

A *mashk* or skin for water = 6*d*.

A common *kaleon* (pipe) with an earthenware vase and head, and wooden tubes = 3*d*.

Two coarse carpets (*gileem*) = 5*s*.

Two quilts (*lahâff*) for bedding = 10*s*.

All these articles will cost 3*l*. 5*s*. 6*d*. His annual expenses will then be the following:—

Clothes for self, wife and boys = about 30*s*.

A *kapaneek* or felt pea jacket, and two small ones for the boys: these will last for several years = 10*s*.

Felt caps (*kooláh*) for self and boys: these will also last many years = 2*s*.

Three pairs of *malakee* or common shoes = 4*s*.

A pair of *alangoo* or common bracelets for the wife, made of very debased silver, and a necklace (*gardan-bund*) of the same = 7*s*.

During the year, the family of four will consume about 100 *mans* of wheat; 100 *mans* of barley; 100 *mans* of *zoorrat* (Indian corn); 5 *mans* of rice; and 3 *mans* of pulse. These the cultivator grows himself, and he is furnished by his cattle with milk, butter &c. He also keeps some fowls, which supply him with eggs.

Beef or mutton, of the common sort, 6 *mans* = 3*s*.

Salt, 1 *kharwár* or donkey-load = 3*d*.

Pepper and spice, 2 *vakkas* (nearly 2 lbs) = 8*d.*
Tobacco, common coarse kind, 2 *mans* = 1*s*. 6*d.*
Grape treacle (*sheera*) 3 *mans* = 1*s*. 3*d.*

If there is a schoolmaster in the village, he will receive ten or twelve *mans* of wheat or barley, yearly, for teaching the two boys to read and write; but no money, unless as an extra present.

The better class of husbandmen spend considerably more than the above, according to their means. The poorer peasants spend less; as they rarely taste meat, and eat but little wheat or barley; living principally on *allum* (small millet) and *zoorrat* (Indian corn). In other parts of the country, the expense may be rather more or less than the above-mentioned.

After midday, the weather continuing fine, I went out with my gun, to pick up some game; but the clayey soil of the plain, moist with rain and melted snow, was so thick and tenacious, that walking became a severe labour; and I was fain to leave off, after getting two brace of partridges and a wildduck. I lost another duck in the river. In the evening, after dinner, the women came to beg for physic, and the men to talk and ask questions "usque ad nauseam." The women wore no veils, and were by no means bashful or timid before a stranger. Most unlovely dames were they; wild-looking, sunburnt and swarthy, with long elf-locks of tangled hair. They wore on their heads, small circular turbans,

flat on the crown, and ornamented with rude brass trinkets. Their dress and general appearance reminded me forcibly of the Brinjâri women of India.*

A Persian never calls his wife by her name. The owner of the house in which I lodged, always addressed his better half as "mother of Akbar," Akbar being the name of their eldest son.

Next morning at a very early hour, I quitted Seevund; our next stage being eight farsakhs, or about 28 miles, distant. After proceeding about one farsakh, we forded the Polvâr river, and continued our course up the west bank of that stream. By this time it was broad daylight. At the distance of another farsakh, we passed a small fort with some vineyards adjoining, named Kowâmâbâd, after the Hâjee-Kowâm, who erected it eight years ago; this forming part of his *tuyool* possessions. The vines were all standards, cut down into stunted bushes, as is the common fashion at the Cape of Good Hope; but not the general practice in this country, where they are more usually trained on walls or wooden frames. Here we encountered a long string of more than a hundred camels, conveying wheat from Ispahan

* The Brinjâris, also called Lumbâdies, are a tribe of Hindoos, much resembling Gypsies. They are the great inland carriers in the peninsula of Southern India, and convey grain, salt, and other goods in every direction. They have no fixed domicile, and speak a patois of their own. The men are great cattle-thieves, and the women are not less dexterous in stealing children from the villages through which they pass.

arrow-head. The sculpture is in very low relief, and so defaced and indistinct, that had I not been aware of its existence, from Morier's travels, I should probably have passed it unnoticed.

Numerous fragments of building and sculpture lie around; but they were all nearly hidden in snow. A low hill, a mile north of these ruins, is called the Takhti Suleimân, or "Solomon's throne." This hillock is faced by a platform built of immense blocks of grayish-white marble, very compactly laid, like the terrace of Persepolis. Below it, are the remains of walls. All the way from hence to the village of Moorgaub, some miles to the northward, ruins of ancient buildings are to be seen; and it is generally agreed, beyond a doubt, that here stood the great city of Pasargadae, the rival and neighbour of Persepolis.

I returned to the village, in order to examine the beautiful tomb, before darkness had set in. The sarcophagus stands upon a high base or pedestal, of pyramidal form, and composed of enormous blocks of white marble, rising in seven steps or layers, every upper layer being considerably smaller than that immediately beneath it. The lowest layer is forty-five feet long by thirty-eight broad; while the upper upon which the tomb stands, is not more than twenty-six feet by twenty. The tomb or sarcophagus itself, which resembles a small house with a shelving roof and gable ends, is twenty-one feet long by seventeen

broad; and like its basis, is entirely constructed of white marble, built in the most solid and durable manner that can be imagined. At one end is a small doorway, the only aperture, not more than three feet high. All the blocks of marble, composing the mausoleum and its base, have been fastened together with iron cramps, the marks of which are visible in every separate mass. The people call it the Masjidi Mâderi Suleimân, or "Mosque of Solomon's Mother," and insist that Hanâna the mother of the wise king of Judea (for the name of Bathsheba is unknown to them) was entombed in this small edifice, which was constructed by the *deevs* expressly in her behalf. The story is as silly as Persian legends often are; for neither Solomon nor his mother ever came near this spot: but Morier and others have pronounced the tomb to be that of Cyrus the Great; who, as Xenophon tells us, died a natural death about B.C. 530, and was buried at Pasargadae; where Alexander the Great afterwards visited his monument.

For my part, I have no doubt of the accuracy of this opinion. We have every reason to believe that here stood the city of Pasargadae; and the tomb which Arrian has described, could hardly be any other than this curious relic of antiquity. It is true that we have had various accounts of the death of the great Cyrus. Herodotus says that he was taken prisoner and put to death by the Scythian warrior Queen Tomyris; and Persian

annals assert that he was removed from the world, like Enoch or Elijah; for there can be little doubt that the Kei Khosrow of their historians, is the Cyrus of the Greek writers. The account of his supernatural disappearance forms a beautiful passage in the Shah Nameh. I shall, however, be content to believe Xenophon's story, and that this edifice is actually the sepulchre of the most illustrious of Persia's ancient kings. Morier has given a very accurate representation of this mausoleum, in his first Journey.

Being aware that men are not permitted to enter the tomb, as it is supposed to be the resting-place of Solomon's mother, I determined on going in (as I could perceive that the little door was open) before anybody could arrive to prevent me; and accordingly climbed up the base and entered the sanctuary. My curiosity was speedily gratified, for the small chamber contained nothing except a few lamps, and some shreds of cloth and paper strewed on the floor. The interior was much blackened with smoke; but I could see no sculpture, save a nearly effaced Arabic inscription with a kind of ornamental border round it. The walls of the sarcophagus are full five feet thick, so that the interior is a very small apartment, eleven feet long and seven broad. It is about eight feet high, and roofed with two large slabs of marble, lying beneath the outer sloping roof. Mahomedans entertain a singular reserve in entering the sepulchres of the dead, as if they were in

the presence of the living. In Soonnee tradition it is related that Ayesha, the widow of the false prophet, was wont to visit the tomb at Medina, in which her father and husband were interred, unveiled; but when Omar was buried there beside them, she never went thither without her veil! The tombs of Moslem ladies are rarely visited by any males, excepting the near relations of the deceased.

The mausoleum has been surrounded with a fine peristyle of pillars, twenty-four in number; the broken stumps of which remain; and the people have further disfigured them, by running up a dirty mud wall between the columns, so as to enclose the spot. A burying-ground lies around it, to the distance of several yards.

The village, which is named after the tomb, is a miserable place, consisting of a number of low mud huts, mostly of a circular shape, and flat roofed. The one I got into, I could not stand upright in, and it was dirty in the extreme; but the place afforded no other accommodation. The remains of a large caravansary lie on one side of the village, completely ruined and uninhabitable. The people here are a squalid wild-looking race, more savage in appearance than any I had yet seen in Persia.

We started on the following morning before dawn, having a march of nine farsakhs or 32 miles before us. It was bitterly cold, and the whole country was covered with deep snow.

When the sun was high, the refraction of its beams from the wide expanse of snow was exceedingly annoying, scorching my face and hurting my eyes. To remedy this, I fastened the ends of a silk handkerchief round my Persian cap, allowing it to fall over my face, which served as a sufficient protection. The Persians, in such cases, always wear a shade or veil of some kind, or inflammation of the eyes is certain to ensue. The only inconvenience I experienced in wearing the handkerchief, was that it confined the breath, and as the frost was very hard all day, I constantly found it sticking to my lips and nose, while my beard was a mass of icicles. This part of the country is considered a *sarhadd* or "cold region," and seems to be uninhabited; for I saw no sign of human dwelling, till we reached the solitary caravansary of Khoneh Kergaum, five farsakhs from the last stage. This caravansary, which was built by Kureem Khan, I found perfectly empty, with no keeper, no gates, no one living within miles of it, and of course, nothing to be got. The court and cells were much dilapidated, and in a most filthy condition; and the carcasses of a dead mule, a donkey, and two or three smaller animals, were putrifying in the middle of the yard. Here I partook of a hasty déjeûné; and unable to find any fuel to boil my teakettle, I was obliged to wash down my cold fowl, bread and hard-boiled eggs, with a draught of icy water. We then

remounted, pleased to get away from such a forbidding place, and continued our way over a dreary waste, where a narrow path led through the deep snow.

In the evening, about sunset, we reached Dihbeed, another solitary caravansary, where we were to pass the night. This proved to be a dirty, dilapidated, comfortless place; but we found two peasants living in it, from whom we contrived to get a little firewood, and some barley and straw for the cattle. The name of this station signifies "village of willows," but both village and willow trees have vanished, though traces of the former are visible on one side of the caravansary. One of the men living here, told me that the people had all quitted the high road, and betaken themselves to more remote localities, in consequence of having been so frequently plundered by the Shah's troops on march, and other travellers of distinction. Persian nobles when travelling with their numerous attendants, are accustomed to take by force from the poor villagers, whatever supplies they require, without paying for a single thing; and the march of Persian troops is a much greater evil than an invasion by an enemy. I am now convinced that the traveller passing through this country, will form a very erroneous idea of its population, cultivation and resources, if he judges merely by what he sees from the main road. The greater number of the inhabited and cul-

tivated spots are hidden in the vallies and defiles of the huge mountain ranges, far from roads and the intrusion of visitors. In these nooks, water is to be found, and fertile soil; while the principal roads lie through the plains, which are little else than extensive deserts.

Next morning, after breakfasting, we started for Khoneh Korrah, distant five farsakhs or nearly 18 miles. The country was all one endless sheet of snow, while a brilliant sun flamed in a cloudless sky, causing an intense white glare sufficient to put one's eyes out. When we had proceeded a few miles, we encountered a large party of travellers, journeying southward, among whom were several women in *kajâvehs* carried on mules. The *kajâveh* is a wooden frame, something like a cradle, about four feet long, and covered with a canopy of cloth, four feet high, slit open in front. Two of these frames are slung upon a mule, one on either side, each containing a lady. Sometimes a lady occupies one frame, and has two or three little children, as a counterpoise, in the other. Men never use this conveyance, except when too unwell to ride on horseback. The *takhti-ravân* is a superior vehicle, much used by ladies of rank. It is a large litter with long shafts projecting in front and rear, by which it is borne on two mules, one before and the other following. A third mule goes in front, on which the guide of the vehicle is mounted.

After crossing a range of hills, we came upon a plain in which is the caravansary of Khoneh Korrah, an isolated building, with neither gates, keeper, nor any one residing near it. Here, however, we found a party going to Sheerauz with sheep and cattle; from whom I purchased some firewood, forage, and a supply of coarse bread; for my store of provender was nearly exhausted. In spite of the silk veil, which I had worn all day, my face was swelled, and my eyes smarted severely. The sun had occasionally been warm, though its power had no effect on the snow.

In the evening, a Seiyid arrived, on his way from Sheerauz to Yezd, and thought fit to honour me with his company in my cell, where we had two or three hours' conversation together, while partaking of tea. He was a loquacious silly fellow; and having met with some Englishmen at Tabreez, some time previous, he had picked up sundry scraps of information about England and Europe, and considered himself particularly knowing. I found it no easy task to answer his questions, which were exceedingly numerous, and not seldom, abundantly foolish. He could by no means understand how our Queen's husband had nothing to do with the government of the kingdom and affairs of state; and wished to know whether, in the event of her getting tired of his company, she could not put him to death, or divorce him, and take to herself another lord! He had heard that the English, some years ago,

emancipated all their black slaves, and was curious to know why this was done, and what amount of compensation their government paid to the owners of these slaves; but when I informed him that this measure had been adopted through a spirit of philanthropy and Christian charity, and that the sum paid amounted to twenty millions of our money, or considerably more than forty thousand thousands of tomâns, he sat silent for a while, looking puzzled, and evidently considering me a more egregious and barefaced liar than any of his own mendacious countrymen!

He next commenced a discussion on cosmography, and endeavoured to show that the sun moved round the stationary earth; but finding that I could not agree with him on this point, he struck off into a religious argument, and assuring me that he had read the Persian version of the New Testament (which he clearly knew nothing about), demanded to know what grounds we had for asserting a Trinity, as no such thing was mentioned therein. I referred him to the commencement of John's Gospel and the fifth chapter of John's first Epistle, reminding him that our Lord was called the "Word of God" in the third *soora* of his own Koran; but the poor man knew as little of his own sacred volume as of our Scriptures. I was not sorry when he took his leave, for I was rather tired and sleepy.

Our next day's march was to Soormek, distant six farsakhs. The road was level and good, lying

for the most part across a long valley, like the plain of Sheerauz. Snow was lying in patches on the plain, not much having fallen here. The hills on the west side of the valley were completely covered with snow, while those on the east side were brown and bare, without a speck of white upon them. At the extremity of the valley, and near the foot of the hills, lies the village of Soormek, a substantial place containing about 250 houses; surrounded with high walls, and towers at intervals. The caravansary where we lodged, a dirty incommodious place, was outside of the walls; and here was stationed a guard of cavalry, for the suppression of thieves on the high road. At a short distance, lies another village, named Feizabad, and between the two, are several gardens protected by walls. The revenue of this place, I was told, amounts to 2000 tomâns annually. Close to Soormek, I saw the remains of a very singular old fort, or something of the kind, which looked like a hillock hollowed out in rooms, vaults and passages, bricked in the interior, and surrounded with a deep dry ditch.

The following day's journey was a short one, to Abâdeh, distant four farsakhs or about fifteen miles. The road was good, and nearly free from snow. We passed several villages, some inhabited and others in ruins, all walled like forts. At noon we reached Abâdeh, a very large fortified village, with a brick wall and well-built gateway.

The wall encloses nearly 500 houses; and the place seems to be well peopled. The inhabitants were better clad, and looked better off, than any I had seen on the road; and many of the females wore mantles and veils as in the larger towns. This place is said to be cool in summer, but much fever-and-ague prevails at that season. I got lodgings in a house within the walls, as two small caravansaries outside the gate were dirty and uninviting in appearance. In the evening, while my dinner was getting ready, I was much amused by a contest of wit and repartee, between our *chârvadar*, a Sheerauzee, and an Ispahanee camel-driver, who was putting up at one of the caravansaries. Much rivalry exists between the inhabitants of these two cities, and indeed between all the natives of Fars and Irauk; and innumerable are the stories and jokes they recount at each other's expense. This kind of badinage, which in England would be vulgarly denominated "chaffing," is very common among Persians, who generally exhibit a good deal of keen, cutting, and not over delicate wit, in these encounters. The Persians are by no means as much addicted to gross and filthy abuse, as most other Asiatics, and Indians in particular, are, to a disgusting extent. A Persian is seldom abusive, except when angry, and the better classes eschew such vulgarity. The women are said to be the greatest proficients in this branch of rhetoric.

Next day we went on to Shoolgistoon, distant

five farsakhs. The road was covered with snow, but level and good; and the day being cloudy, there was none of the distressing glare which had annoyed me so much. These level roads are no small luxury after the rugged *kotuls* between Bushire and Sheerauz. At Shoolgistoon there is a caravansary, built by Abbas the Great, which has been a fine one, but is now much out of repair. It is constructed of brick upon stone foundations. Within a hundred yards of the caravansary is a small fort, containing thirty families, and attached to this, is an Imaumzâdeh with a dome covered with green tiles; wherein, it is said, repose the ashes of Mahommed, a son of the Imaum Zein-ul-Abideen. Around the spot may be seen the traces of a deserted village. The lands attached to this place, pay an annual *máliyát* of 200 tomâns.

A violent and piercingly cold wind blew all night; and I sat up nearly the whole time, with my pipe in my mouth, and a brazier of hot charcoal between my feet, unable to sleep from cold. Whether the heat of India has rendered me more susceptible of a chilly temperature than I should otherwise be, I know not; but I have felt the cold more keenly this winter in Persia, than I ever did in Britain.

The following day's route was to Yezdikhaust, six farsakhs distant. The day was cloudy, and the wind continued exceedingly cold. No snow or rain fell, but two or three damp searching

fogs passed over us on the way. Having proceeded for some miles along a flat plain, we came suddenly upon a deep ravine, like a huge trench, about half a mile in width, and extending for some miles in length. A stream of water runs along this ravine, the whole of which appears to be well cultivated. In the middle of the hollow, stands an abrupt steep rock, on the summit of which is perched the curious, compact little town of Yezdikhaust, a singular-looking place as I ever beheld. The houses extend to the very verge of the cliff, and appear ready to roll down the precipice: many of them have verandahs or railed places projecting completely over the perpendicular height, supported on thick beams built into the walls. At the bottom of the rock, there are several caves, partly natural and partly excavated, some of which are used as stables and folds for cattle, and others are full of water.

On one side of the ravine, and on the bank of the stream opposite to the rock sustaining the town, is a well-built and large caravansary; but its empty cells looked so cold and comfortless, that I determined on lodging, if possible, in the town, and sent a servant to procure quarters, which he soon succeeded in doing. In order to approach the town, it was necessary to cross the ravine, and ride up a steep path, leading to the top of the north-east side; whence a wooden drawbridge leads over a deep abyss, to the gate, which is so small that one cannot enter on horse-

back. My hands and feet were so numbed and petrified with cold, that in attempting to dismount, I fairly tumbled off my horse, and was carried into the fortress-town by two men; and quickly ushered into a large room, with a blazing wood fire in the midst, before which I was deposited to thaw at leisure; but no sooner had sensation revived in my limbs, than my face and eyes smarted so violently that I was obliged to withdraw to a little distance. The only access to Yezdikhaust is by this drawbridge, which connects the isolated cliff with the adjacent plain. The houses are all two stories high, disposed on two sides of a narrow dirty street.

The arrival of a Feringee at this place is evidently a rarity, and numbers of people flocked in to see me; till the room, a pretty large one, was completely crowded. These visitors were inquisitive to a rather disagreeable extent—my air-bed, gun, telescope and revolver pistols were minutely examined and admired, and my medical skill called in requisition, but I declined practising, though I had some difficulty in persuading the applicants that every Frank was not necessarily a doctor. The kedkhoda was absent, but his son called on me, and civilly offered me any assistance I required. Hearing that I had had no butcher meat on the road, he immediately sent me a fat lamb. When after some delay and difficulty, the room was cleared of intruders, my dinner was brought from a cookshop. The wheat raised at

Yezdikhaust is considered the best in Persia, and the bread of this place is proverbially good, like the wine of Sheerauz and the women of Yezd.

The process of baking bread, practised in this country, is simple, and may easily be described. The *tannoor* or oven is a large earthen jar, about four feet deep, shaped like an egg, and built into the *sukkoo* (platform) in front of the shop. The mouth, at the upper extremity of the jar, is about a foot wide, while the diameter of the middle or widest part is two feet or more. There is a smaller aperture at the bottom to admit a draught of air for the sake of the fire. The fuel used in this oven, consists chiefly of the small thorny plants and shrubs, found in abundance on the plains. The dough is mixed with leaven, instead of yeast, and when kneaded is divided into small round lumps, which are ranged on one side. When the oven is well heated, and the fuel burnt down to red embers at the bottom, the baker, having first tied up his beard with a bandage to save it from scorching, and fastened a damp cloth round his right arm, takes the lumps of dough, one after another, flattens them out into cakes, and plasters them on the inside of the glowing oven. The whole number being thus disposed of, an operation executed with great rapidity, the mouth of the oven is closed with a lid; and when sufficiently baked, which takes a very short time, the cakes are fished out with an iron rod hooked at the end. The intro-

duction and timely removal of the bread require a degree of care and dexterity which practice alone can teach. Some other sorts of bread are prepared in different ways. The *nooni saujee*, as well as the *nooni luwáshee*, a very thin scone or wafer, is baked on an iron girdle, like cakes in Scotland; and the *nooni sangek*, a very good kind, is cooked on heated gravel. The *koomáj*, a small thick cake, is made in a metal shape, and cooked in a *koora* or small oven, like pastry. The best kind of bread is about three quarters of an inch thick, while some of the inferior sort, baked on the girdle, is almost as thin as cartridge paper.

The cookshops in all the towns are a great convenience to travellers. In these, one can always get good bread, and *khoorish* or dressed meat of some kind to eat with it.* The best thing is the ordinary *kabáb* made of minced meat and spice, plastered on a flat skewer and broiled over a pan of charcoal. In shape, the *kabábs* resemble flattened sausages. The curdled milk, called *maust*, is a favourite traveller's dish, but not so much so in cold weather.

After dinner, a number of people came again,

* The term *khoorish* is equivalent to our Scottish phrase "kitchen," and signifies anything eaten with bread or boiled rice as a relish. Victuals which do not require cooking, such as bread, cheese, fruit, &c., are called *hâziree*, implying "ready at hand," a word in India erroneously used to signify a breakfast of cooked dishes.

and kept up a lengthy conversation till a late hour — very interesting and edifying to them perhaps, but sufficiently tiresome to me.

In the morning, before starting, I walked outside of the town to look around. Near the bridge, there is an imaumzâdeh built over the grave of Seiyid Alee, a son of the Imaum Moosa Kâzim. One very ugly feature in this curious town, is that all the sinks and drains empty down the sides of the rock, which in consequence presents a most repulsive appearance; and this has gained for the place, the Turkish nickname of *Pokhloo kala* or "Filth castle."

Yezdikhaust or Eezidkhaust is an ancient place, and is said to have existed long previous to the Mahomedan conquest. I could not ascertain the number of its inhabitants; but the yearly *mâliyât*, I was informed, amounts to 1800 tomâns.

There had been a fall of snow in the night, and the wind had lulled. Our road was nothing more than a path through the snow. About two farsakhs from Yezdikhaust, we crossed the frontier of Fars and entered the province of Irauk, the first village of which province we came to, was Ameenâbâd, once a large place, but now mostly in ruins. Here is a large caravansary, said to have been built by Shah Abbas: but we pushed on without stopping; and three farsakhs further on, reached Maksoodbegee where we were to halt for the night. The ruins

of this place cover a large extent of ground; and the crumbling remains of several forts and towers, appear among the debris of smaller dwellings. The caravansary is a miserable place, more than half of it being in ruins. The inhabited portion of Maksoodbegee consists of nearly 60 houses, walled round like a fort; and this village and its lands are held in *tuyool* by the Shah's mòther, paying a yearly *mâliyât* of 500 tomâns. The lands are well watered by *kanâts* or subterraneous watercourses, and the cultivators are able to raise three crops annually on the same ground, one of wheat and two of barley. Most of the latter grown here, is of the coarse kind called *jowi toorush* or "sour barley," on which horses are fed. In a field near, I observed some stalks of the *ooshak* or gum-ammoniac plant, much resembling hemlock; and I was informed that it grows wild in plenty hereabouts. One of the villagers, who brought me a supply of milk and eggs, told me that a very large village had formerly existed here; but having the misfortune to be on the high road, it had been so frequently plundered and ruined by the king's soldiery, that nearly all of the inhabitants had deserted it. Destitute of any commissariat, and without pay, the soldiers are compelled to provide for their wants by pillage and robbery; and besides this, they often do a great deal of wanton mischief.

Our next stage was Komeisha, four farsakhs

distant. The road, which was easy and level though covered with snow, lay along the skirt of a range of hills on the right, with an extensive plain on the left hand. Many villages appeared on this plain, a great part of which is cultivated. Komeisha is a large straggling town, walled round; with seven gates and numerous towers. It was once as large and populous as Sheerauz, but having been completely destroyed by the Affghans, during their invasion in Shah Hosein's time, it has never regained its former importance. The greater part of the interior is in ruins, and heaps of ruins also lie without the walls. I was told that the town contains 3000 inhabited houses; but this is a manifest exaggeration: a fifth part of that number would, I suspect, be nearer the truth. The revenue of the town and all its dependencies, amounts to upwards of 10,000 tomâns. The streets and bazârs were narrow, dirty, and filled with snow; which having partly melted and afterwards frozen hard, rendered the way extremely slippery. There are two or three small caravansaries; but instead of taking up my quarters in one of these, I was conducted to a *mihmân-khoneh* or private lodging for travellers of the better sort, with the owner of which, our chârvadar was well acquainted. Here I got into a room, well carpetted and comfortably fitted up—a luxury I had not experienced since I left Sheerauz.

There are manufactures here of cloth of various

kinds, carpets and coarse crockery ware. The cloth-soled shoes of Komeisha are, in particular, considered of first-rate quality, and sent to all parts of the country. This kind of shoe, termed *geeva* and *malakee**, is universally worn, particularly by the middle and lower classes; and its fabric is curious enough to deserve particular notice. The sole is made of rags, moistened, folded up and beaten with a heavy iron pestle, till hammered into a hard compact mass. When flattened out to form a sole, a red-hot needle is passed through lengthways, drawing after it a slender thong of raw hide ; and in this manner, four or five thongs are drawn through, binding the sole together, while to the extremities of the thongs are fastened a number of pieces of hard untanned hide, compactly pressed together, to form a defence for the toe and heel of the shoe. The edges of the sole are then trimmed into proper shape; and the upper part of the shoe, which is made of strong cotton thread knitted thick, is sewed on with a binding of the same material. A sole of this description is far more durable than any of leather; but the shoe is only adapted to dry ground and weather, as wet soaks through and spoils it.

Great numbers of the long-handled carved

* There is, I believe, a slight difference between the two. Both are made of the same material and in the same manner, but the *geeva* has the toe long and turned up, while the *malakee* is rounded off at the toes.

wooden spoon, denominated *kâshuk*, are also made here. This is an elegant branch of manufacture. These spoons are pretty but fragile articles, the wood being sometimes cut nearly as thin as paper. The handles are broad, thin, and wrought in a fine net-work pattern: this is executed with small files. The only woods used for these spoons, are the *goolâbee* (pear) and *shimshâd* (box).

Next morning we went on to Mâhyâr, distant four farsakhs. As we issued from the gate of Komeisha, I observed several curious round turrets, among the masses of hideous ruins lying on the plain; and was informed that these were pigeon-towers, of which I should see abundance at Ispahan. As we passed the tomb of a saint, situated in a garden, at some distance from the town, three sturdy beggars, in the shape of wandering derveeshes, rushed forth and began to demand alms in a loud authoritative tone. As I make it a rule never to give anything to these characters, I continued deaf to their entreaties; though they followed us, importuning with all their might, for nearly a mile. These peripatetic derveeshes, generally termed *kallunders*, are to be found wandering over the country, and are greatly revered and honoured by the ignorant superstitious people. They are wild looking fellows, clad in odd fanciful garments, and usually carrying with them, the skin of a deer or leopard, a large calabash cup for receiving alms, a horn to blow

for the purpose of announcing their presence, and an axe, a dagger or other weapon. They, of course, lay claim to great sanctity, and pretend to be inspired—while their profession of holiness, self-denial and austerity of life, is often a mere cloak for all manner of profligacy and villainy. Some believe, or at least assert, that by dint of incessant prayer and intense contemplation, they have united themselves so closely with the Divine Spirit, that they have attained the height of human perfection, and are entitled to act as they please in all respects (the doctrine, by the bye, of the Illuminati of Spain) as no crime they can commit, can really be sinful!—and thus they are independent of law and gospel, like the gifted brethren of Hudibras—

> "For saints can do the same thing by
> The Spirit in sincerity
> Which other men are tempted to
> And at the devil's instance do."

These sanctified rogues are the only troublesome beggars I have encountered in this country.

Mâhyâr is a small and poor village, containing about 200 houses surrounded with a mud wall. At the foot of a large rock, stands an extensive and admirably built caravansary, erected, I believe, by the mother of Abbas the Great. It is constructed of burnt brick, upon massive stone foundations; and has a double range of rooms

above and below, with stone stairs. The stables are ample, and all of the accommodations laid out and built in the best manner. In the centre of the court is a square *sukkoo* faced with stone; and close to the entrance a large *aub-ambâr* (cistern) covered in on top. The whole is unfortunately much out of repair. The blue and green tilework which ornamented the gateway and court, is nearly all broken away, the walls are partly dilapidated, and much of the stone has been carried off by the neighbouring villagers for their own uses. This is the largest and finest caravansary I have seen, and it is much to be regretted that it should be suffered to fall into decay.

Many antelopes are caught hereabouts at this season. When the snow lies deep on the ground, the timid gazelles seem to lose their wonted dread of human dwellings, and come round the villages seeking food. Greyhounds are then let slip at them, and as the antelope, with its small sharp hoofs, runs with great difficulty in the snow, the dog is pretty sure to overtake it. On dry ground, no dog has any chance with an animal so swift and agile. In Spring the antelopes have young, and the fawns are pursued and caught by dogs, which are trained not to worry or injure them. The Persian greyhound is a fine animal; not quite as swift of foot as the English, but possessing far greater strength and power of endurance.

Our next day's journey was our last march, including nine farsakhs or about 30 miles. The country was dreary and barren as usual. At the distance of a few miles from Mâhyâr, the two chains of hills between which we had travelled for some days, meet together in a knot of abrupt craggy rocks, through which leads a mountain defile, named the *kotuli oorcheenee* or "stairs pass," the only pass of the kind I have met with since my journey to Sheerauz. A tolerably good road has been made over this *kotul*, which hardly exceeds a mile in length, and is a mere trifle in comparison with any one on the way from Bushire. In one place, steps are cut in the rock, from which the pass has derived its name, but so broad and low, that there is no difficulty in riding over them. In the centre and highest part of the pass, stands a dilapidated tower. After crossing this defile, a distant view of Ispahan and its environs presented itself, at intervals, from every rising ground. The remainder of the road lay over an undulating expanse of bare desert country; till turning by the east side of the mount of Sooffa, the whole of the once splendid, and now half ruined, capital of the Suffavean kings appeared in full view.

I entered Julfa, the Armenian quarter of the city, lying south of the river; and passing through a number of thinly peopled streets, made my way to the house of Khaja Stephen Petroos —commonly known by the title of Mr. Peter

Stephens — the English agent in this city, an elderly Armenian gentleman, who received me very civilly. Mr. Stephens was educated at Madras, and speaks English fluently. I had also the pleasure of receiving a budget of English and Indian letters and newspapers; a pleasure that can be fully appreciated only by a wanderer in outlandish regions, where communication with the civilized world is precarious and rare; and where everything that meets his eye only serves to remind him of the barbarism with which he is surrounded, and the absence of every friendly and congenial object. The whole distance from Sheerauz to Ispahan must be nearly 270 miles.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ispahan.—Julfa.—The Armenians.—Their History — Religion.—Manners.

With the assistance of our English agent, I quickly procured a house in Julfa, in which suburb a residence was preferable to one in the Moslem city of Ispahan. My house is a wilderness of rooms, sufficiently numerous to quarter half a regiment; but all rather small, and most so much out of repair as to be scarcely habitable. From the outer door, opening on the street, a dark passage conducts into a court on the north side, which is occupied by a vineyard, with the vines trained upon high wooden frames; and round this runs a brick pavement six feet broad. On three sides of this court are suites of chambers, and on the fourth a high wall. I inhabit one side, consisting of two upper and two lower rooms looking upon the vineyard: at the further end is the stable; and at the opposite angle, the kitchen with its row of small fireplaces constructed of brick. On the south side is another court, with ranges of rooms on two sides, which have formerly served as the *zenána* or ladies'

apartments. This court has been a garden, but nothing now remains in it, save a few stunted pomegranate trees. I make no use of this division of the mansion, having sufficient accommodation for myself and servants on the other side. The house is an old one, and was built in the time of the Suffavean kings. One of the apartments on the south side contains some old fresco paintings executed in European style.

There are sundry portraits of gentlemen in long periwigs, laced cravats, cocked hats and trunk hose, and ladies in hooped petticoats, high-heeled shoes and huge ruffs; besides one half-length of some royal personage in a scarlet mantle, trimmed with ermine, worn over a suit of armour, and the crown and sceptre lying before him. Such paintings are to be seen in many of the houses of Julfa; and it is well known that there were several Dutch and Flemish artists at Ispahan, in the reigns of the two Abbasses. Most of the other apartments are merely whitewashed, and some in the more primitive state of *káh-gil*, that is to say, having the walls daubed with a compost of clay and fine chopped straw, smoothed hard, but of a disagreeable bare mud colour. Most of the doors are furnished with a common Persian substitute for a lock, namely a large wooden bolt fastened on the inside, and running into a crevice in the wall. The lower edge of the bolt is cut in notches, and when the door is to be closed or opened, an iron key of the simplest form is in-

serted in the keyhole and turned round repeatedly. This catches on the notches and thus pushes the bolt backwards or forwards as may be required.

Julfa was built by Abbas the Great, after he had, in 1603, nearly depopulated Armenia, and carried off a vast number of the people into Persia. These Armenians he settled at Ispahan, with a view of introducing an industrious colony into his capital.

According to Fraser, Julfa contained nearly 13,000 inhabitants. This was some thirty years ago; but now there is not one-fourth of that number. By a late census it was found that only 270 houses were inhabited, and ten souls to each house, is the highest estimate admissible. The population is almost entirely Armenian, as very few Mahomedans reside here; but the suburb of Hoseinâbâd, lying west of Julfa, is altogether inhabited by Mahomedans.

The streets of Julfa are wider and more airy than the close lanes of Sheerauz. The principal thoroughfares have a deep water-channel running down the centre, with rows of trees planted on either side. The channel furnishes water for the gardens and vineyards belonging to the houses. These streets are far from clean. Each house has a small cesspool in front, projecting into the side of the thoroughfare, and emitting an abominable effluvia. A slab of stone sometimes covers the unsightly sink, but it is more commonly left open

to infect the air. This ugly fashion prevails in nearly every part of Ispahan.

The place looks dreary and deserted. When Shah Abbas had built and established Julfa, it contained not less than 3400 houses, with a population of 30,000 souls. Now most of the houses are empty and ruinous, and the population has dwindled to a fraction of its former number. The streets are bare and unpeopled: there are very few shops, no manufactories, no bustle or show of activity or industry.

The Armenians are much oppressed by the Moslem authorities, and their condition is certainly not an enviable one, for they are unable to help themselves or to obtain any redress. Julfa is governed by a Mahomedan *zâbit* and *dâroogha;* the first of whom manages fiscal matters, and the latter is a magistrate. Policemen are very few, and not much required; as the people are subdued and quiet.

There are some Roman Catholics (twenty-eight families I believe) among the Armenians of Julfa; but most hold that church in abhorrence, though in fact it differs but little from their own. It rarely happens that any Armenian is perverted to Mahomedanism, though they have many inducements to embrace Islâm; for should any one become a Moslem, he inherits the entire property of his relatives, to the exclusion of nearer heirs.

There are now in Julfa, eleven Armenian churches, and one Roman Catholic chapel; but

some of these churches are unfrequented and going to ruin. In a garden near the town, I saw the remains of a Jesuit chapel, which was built about two hundred years ago. Armenian churches usually have domes like Mahomedan mosques, but on the summit of the dome, a small cross marks the Christian sanctuary. Three or four of the principal churches have peals of bells, which chime in the morning and evening; a pleasing sound, after the vile bawling of Mahomedan muezzins. In the inferior churches, a thin board suspended on cords, beaten with a cudgel, summons the neighbouring congregation.

On the day after my arrival, the son of the English agent conducted me over the principal churches, and other parts of Julfa. Close to the agent's residence, is the church of St. Minas, an edifice not in any way remarkable. The interior was rather dingy and dirty, and the walls were covered with paintings, none of which were much worth looking at. One side exhibited a huge representation of the Day of Judgment, setting forth the happiness of the blest and torments of the condemned, in various fanciful devices. The altar was decorated with tawdry hangings and tarnished tinsel.

We next visited the Roman Catholic chapel and convent, belonging to the order of Dominicans. Two or three monks usually reside here. The chapel, which was built in 1705, was in good

repair, and had lately been newly whitewashed and ornamented. Over the altar there was one tolerably good picture; the rest were mere daubs. The chief monk, who showed us through the place, is a good humoured intelligent old man, who is soon going to Baghdad to be consecrated as bishop. He had been educated at Constantinople, and speaks French, Italian, Turkish and Persian. He had resided here many years; and while partaking of coffee and the kaleon in his apartment, he gave me a lamentable, but no doubt strictly true, account of Persian misgovernment in this unhappy city. The present *sipahdâr* or governor of Ispahan, is now in chains at Tehrân, under an impeachment of malversation and embezzlement of revenue; a lucrative practice carried on, in a greater or less degree, by every ruler in Persia. A governor knows that he is not likely to continue in office longer than three or four years; by which time he is pretty sure to be deposed by some intrigue or other; and meanwhile he screws the people, and fills his pockets as fast as he can, inventing all manner of lying reports about bad seasons and failure of crops. When deposed and supplanted by some one who can bribe the ministry higher, he is called on to render an account of his stewardship, and unless he can, by dint of influence and bribes, contrive to get off unscathed, he is usually imprisoned and maltreated till compelled to disgorge all his ill-got wealth. A country under

such mismanagement can hardly be expected to flourish!

From hence, we visited the Armenian nunnery, an enclosed suite of buildings with a chapel attached. Here reside eighteen nuns belonging to the Armenian church. The lady abbess, a very old decrepit woman, came to see us in the chapel, and conversed with us for a few minutes. The chapel contained nothing worthy of notice: there was the usual paraphernalia of rude paintings and tawdry finery.

Our next visit was to the Armenian church of St. Joseph, built by Shah Abbas for his Christian subjects. It is surmounted by a large dome, beautifully ornamented in the interior with enamelled arabesque pattern. The walls are covered with pictures representing Scriptural subjects; miracles of saints of the Armenian calendar, and of St. Gregory the Illuminator in particular; tortures inflicted on holy martyrs; and the Day of Judgment, with the figures as large as life. At one end of the church, I remarked a genealogical tree of the twelve tribes springing from Jacob, wrought on a ground of black velvet. In front of the entrance to the church, stands a *chârtauk* or arched dome raised on pillars over a grave; which, I was informed, is the tomb of a son of Suleimân Khan, an Armenian general of high rank in the Shah's army. Moslem potentates in general object to Christians serving in their armies, and fighting the battles of the faith-

ful; but the Shah of Persia entertains no such scruples; and many of the best soldiers in this country, have been Christians. Near this monument, in the court of the church, are the tombs of several Englishmen. A convent is attached to the church, and lies on one side of the court; a few priests residing in it.

After a long journey, the traveller can thoroughly appreciate the luxury of a bath. There are two public baths in Julfa, the best of which lies near the church of St. Minas. The Persian bath is certainly inferior to the Turkish, which I have so often enjoyed in Egypt. The building itself perhaps looks better; but the whole process of bathing is, in this part of the world, by no means as complete and luxurious as at Cairo. Much of the process is however very similar; and there is an equal amount of sousing, drenching, soaping, scrubbing and shampooing. Much time is spent in dyeing the beard, an operation never omitted at the bath. For this purpose, a paste of *henna* made of the leaves of the plant, pounded fine and mixed with water, is rubbed in and plastered on the beard; the effect of which is to dye the hair a bright red colour. In half an hour, this is washed off, and another paste, called *rung*, composed of the powdered leaves of the indigo plant, is rubbed on, and allowed to remain for nearly an hour. This latter application changes the red hue to a deep black, a very durable dye; for the operation need not be re-

peated above once a month. I have never used the *rung*, but occasionally apply the *henna*, which imparts to my beard a ruddy tinge, rather more fiery than its natural colour. I wonder that this process has never been introduced into England. For those who desiderate raven locks, this mode is far more efficacious, and less injurious, than any of the numerous Titmouse dyes set forth and puffed in our perfumers' advertisements.

On the south-west side of Julfa, a little way outside of the town, lies an extensive Armenian burying-ground. The numerous graves are covered with large quadrangular oblong blocks of granite, with an inscription on the top, and sometimes bearing sculptured emblems of the trade or profession of him whose remains lie beneath. In one part of the ground, are the graves of several Europeans, mostly Dutch and Russians, who died at Ispahan during the last two centuries. I observed the tomb of only one Englishman, a Doctor Edward Pagett, who died here in 1702; and beside it lies another stone bearing the epitaph "Cy git Rodolfe," without date or further explanation. The story of this individual has been told by Tavernier, and is worth repeating. Rodolfe Stadler was a Swiss Protestant, a watchmaker by trade, and employed in that capacity by Shah Suffee. He had the misfortune to kill a Persian, who had entered his house by night with felonious intentions. For a Christian to kill a Mussulman, under any circum-

stances, was deemed by the whole moollah-hood, a crime to be expiated only by instant death; no compensation of blood-money being permitted in such a case; and Rodolfe was accordingly sentenced to die, by the unanimous voice of all the holy men of Ispahan. The Shah had, however, a great regard for the watchmaker, and determined to save him if possible. He proposed to Rodolfe that he should abjure his faith and turn Mussulman, promising him, in that case, a free pardon, a fortune of 10,000 tomâns, and a noble Persian lady for a wife—but the Swiss was staunch—he preferred death to apostasy—and was accordingly beheaded, in October 1637. He was regarded by the Armenians as a sainted martyr, and sick persons were wont to pray at his grave for their recovery.

Among Mahomedans, murder is often expiated by a fine, denominated *deeyat* or *khoon-bahâ* (price of blood), paid to the relatives of the slain. They have, however, the option of accepting or refusing this compensation, and in the event of their refusal, the murderer is put to death.*

Julfa is surrounded with gardens, and quantities of fruit are produced here: vines in par-

* In one of the apologues in the Bahâristân of Jamee, a story is told of the son of a notorious miser being asked whether he did not wish that his father might fall sick and die, that he might inherit all his hoarded wealth. "Not so," replied the pious and affectionate youth, "but I wish that some one would murder him, that I might get the blood-money also!"

ticular, flourish luxuriantly. The wine made here is nearly as good as any manufactured at Sheerauz. The commonest kind sells for two keroonees a Shahee *man* (equal to two Tabreez *mans*, or about 14½ lbs. weight), and the better sorts cost two or three times as much. The vine is planted at two seasons of the year—in Aries (end of March) and Scorpio (end of October). The ground intended for a vineyard, is dug over repeatedly with the *beel* or large heavy spade, to the depth of a yard or more, and then smoothed over with the *wáz*, a board studded with iron spikes, used as a harrow, and drawn by oxen. It is then divided into four or more plats, by constructing *khiyabáns* or alleys, a little higher than the level of the soil, and intersecting at right angles. The cuttings of the vine are planted in little holes, about six feet apart, and well watered every ten days: there are usually three cuttings inserted in each hole, about ten inches long above ground. The vine, which here is always trained on a trellis, bears fruit in three years after planting; and is pruned annually at the close of winter.

Potatoes are raised here, and eaten by many of the Armenians, but by none of the Mahomedans; in whose eyes, in spite of Sir John Malcolm's assertions, this vegetable finds no favour. The potatoe is called *seeb-zemeeni* or "ground apple," which appears to be its appellation in many languages. Sir J. Malcolm has claimed the merit of intro-

ducing it into this country, and has informed us that it was called after him "Malcolm's plum;" but this name is now forgotten; and it is indeed very doubtful whether Malcolm first introduced it; for I have heard that the potatoe was brought into Persia, some years before his arrival, by Sir H. J. Brydges.

The bazâr of Julfa is very scanty and ill supplied. Except the commonest necessaries, everything must be procured from the Mahomedan city on the north side of the river. In accordance with the custom of Mahomedans, a market is held on Sunday, in the *meidân* (an open public place) of Julfa; but it is poorly supplied. The Sabbath is not well observed by Armenian Christians. They attend church in the morning; and work or play, as they think fit, during the remainder of the day.

The Armenian men dress like other Persians; but their priests always wear an outer garment of a dark sombre colour, and their lambskin caps have not the *shikesta* or indentation of the upper part, customary with every one else, whether Moslem or Christian.

The Armenians are generally ill-looking, and they all have a downcast sneaking aspect, indicative of an oppressed and impoverished people. From what I have heard, they are an unamiable and unprincipled set; false and mean, as natives of Persia are in general; but without power or spirit to be turbulent. The Christian community

of Julfa is greatly divided against itself: much enmity subsists between families; and a general feeling of mutual jealousy and distrust, only renders them an easier prey to their Mussulman oppressors. Like most Asiatic Christians, they do no credit to the faith they profess; indeed their Christianity seems to be merely nominal, while their lamentable ignorance leaves them destitute of all but the mere name of religion. In other lands — India and Turkey in particular —Armenians are known as an industrious, thriving, moneymaking race; but here, where to be rich is to be criminal, and prosperity is followed by persecution, they are idle, listless and sluggish, too indolent to engage in any task with spirit, and content to live from hand to mouth, as they best can without exertion. All who can contrive to do so, quit this country to seek their fortune elsewhere; but the Persian government throws every obstacle in the way of these emigrants, and when the men are allowed to leave Persia, they are not permitted to take their families along with them. There is little doubt that if it were possible, the entire population of Julfa would at once quit for ever the inhospitable dominions of the Shah.

The Armenian language has, to my ear at least, a harsh and discordant sound, very unpleasing after the harmonious Persian. The modern tongue, I am informed, differs greatly from the ancient language of Armenia, which is very per-

fect and copious; but is now a dead tongue, understood only by a few of the priests and others, who study it as we do Latin. Their Bible is in ancient Armenian, and is consequently a sealed book to the people at large; for they have no version in the modern dialect; and the priests, moreover, do not approve of the perusal of the Scriptures by the laity. Nearly all of the inhabitants of Julfa understand Persian, though very few of them can read or write it, and they speak it in an imperfect hesitating manner, which at once shows that it is not their mother tongue.

There are two schools at Julfa — one supported by a wealthy Armenian mercantile firm at Madras, regarding which I shall have more to say hereafter — and the other, dignified by the name of the college, in which the Persian and Armenian languages are taught, but scarcely anything else. The Armenians have no habit of reading; no desire to enlighten their ignorance; and with the exception of the Bible and a few works in the ancient dead language, they have no books of any value or importance. I know nothing of their language or literature, but I believe they have had poets and historians (like most other nations) whose works are all in the ancient tongue.

Armenian women do not hide their faces completely, as the Mussulman females do. A band of white cloth covers the mouth and chin; and out of doors, a white mantle is worn, which is drawn over the head down to the brows, leaving

the eyes, nose, and cheeks exposed. Their dress is a kind of tunic, open in front and reaching below the knee; begirt at the waist with a curious broad girdle, studded with large plates of silver, linked together. Under this, is another tunic, close and longer; and beneath that, the trousers. On the head is placed a small ugly flat-crowned turban. Their features are coarse and inexpressive: I have not seen one among them, who could be considered in the least degree good looking. The women seem to be more industrious than the men. At home or abroad, they are always hard at work knitting a glove or stocking. I have rarely seen Mahomedan females so employed. It appears to me, that the white sheet and face-band which Armenian women now wear, must formerly have been the universal dress of all Persian females, Mahomedan and otherwise. In old paintings in houses, and illuminated books, &c., women are usually represented in this attire. I have an illustrated copy of the Shah Nameh written near 250 years ago, and some other old illuminated manuscripts, in which all the female figures are clad in the white mantle and band concealing the mouth, but leaving the nose and eyes uncovered. The Armenian women retain the old costume, which the Moslem have abandoned for the more complete disguise of the blue mantle and white veil, entirely concealing every part of the person.

The early history of the Armenian nation is

shrouded in much obscurity; but of the very great antiquity of the nation, and its former prosperity, there can be no doubt. Armenia included a great portion of the country lying between the Caspian and Black Seas, extending to the north frontier of Syria. It is generally supposed that this was the country first inhabited after the Deluge. Mount Ararat stands in the midst of it, and here Noah and his children first established themselves. Some have supposed that the descendants of Noah soon quitted the neighbourhood of Mount Ararat, but this is a point on which Scripture is silent. Mr. Stanley Faber, in his curious work on the origin of paganism, states his belief that Noah's descendants did not emigrate from Armenia till the time of Nimrod, five centuries and a half after the Flood; when this mighty hunter led a great portion of mankind to the plains of Shinar, and there founded the tower and city of Babel.

Armenian annalists have asserted that their monarchy was first established by Haik the great grandson of Japhet, whose successors reigned during a long period of prosperity. Many of these monarchs were enterprizing and warlike. Tigranes, one of the greatest of these kings, assisted Cyrus of Persia in his conquest of Babylon and of Lydia. Vahei, the last of this royal race, was defeated and killed in battle by Alexander the Great; and Armenia then became part of that conqueror's enormous empire; but when

Arsaces the Parthian expelled the Seleucidae, the country recovered its independence. Mithridates king of Pontus, surnamed the Great, extended the limits of the empire greatly; his conquests reaching over the major part of western Asia; till experiencing a reverse of fortune, he committed suicide. Armenia was afterwards invaded at different times by the Greeks, Romans, Jews and Persians; and eventually succumbed to the latter power, and was governed by rulers nominated by the kings of Persia; and after the Moslem conquest of that realm, by deputies from the khaleefas of Baghdad.

In 859, Ashot a chief of the Bagratian family, a tribe of Jewish origin, was appointed by the khaleefa, King of Armenia; and his descendants reigned for nearly two centuries, when the kingdom was destroyed by the armies of the Greek emperors, with whom Armenia had quarrelled on topics of religion. In the eleventh century, the country was overrun by Toghrul Beg the Seljuk; and in the early part of the thirteenth century, it was again laid waste by the successors of the bloody Changheez Khan. The Egyptian princes afterwards ravaged Armenia, and carried off numbers of the people; and the land was soon after invaded and overrun by savage Koords, every trace of the old regal government being completely extinguished.

Since this period, Armenia has never held up her head among nations; and a great proportion

of her children has been diffused amid other countries, an expatriated people. Towards the close of the fourteenth century, the unhappy country was again overwhelmed by the armies of Teimour Lung, who committed the most frightful excesses, and massacred the inhabitants by thousands. Armenia now lay quite at the mercy of other powers. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the wretched people were cruelly oppressed by the Turks, who exacted a heavy tribute from them; and their miserable condition having reached the ears of Shah Abbas of Persia, he undertook to deliver them from Turkish tyranny, by subjecting them to his own. He invaded the country, expelled the Turks; and by way of preventing any future settlement of these intruders on the land, destroyed nearly every town in Armenia, depopulated the country, and carried off a vast number of the inhabitants into his own dominions, where he settled most of them at Ispahan, building for them a large extension of the city, which addition was named Julfa after one of the principal towns in the land of their birth. Armenian families were also settled in many other parts of the Persian dominions.

On account of the unvarying tyranny of their Persian rulers, great numbers of Armenians have seized opportunities of leaving this country, and withdrawing to Russia, India, and Turkey. Like the Israelites, they are scattered over the world,

without a country of their own; and like them also, they have everywhere thriven by industry and commercial enterprize, except in this despotic kingdom, where they exist by sufferance, a crushed and degraded race. The number of Armenians in all different parts of the world, has been reckoned at between four and five millions.

Christianity, according to tradition, was introduced into Armenia by St. Jude or Thaddeus, one of the twelve Apostles of our Lord, who converted King Abgar and many of the inhabitants of Edessa, the Armenian capital.* The son and successor of Abgar apostatized from the faith, and determined on abolishing Christianity in his dominions; the converts were accordingly cruelly persecuted, and St. Bartholomew flayed alive. The above legend is a very doubtful one; but it is nevertheless pretty certain that the first Christian monarch on record, was an Armenian; for when St. Gregory, surnamed the Illuminator, visited that country in the beginning of the fourth century, his apostolic labours were attended with much success, and King Tiridates was converted and baptized; many of his nobles and other subjects following the royal example.

This occurred about thirty years previous to the conversion of Constantine the Great. St. Gregory became pontiff of all Armenia, and baptized great numbers of the people.

* Edessa, now called Orfa, was the Ur of the Chaldees whence Abraham removed to Haran.

In his latter days, sayeth Armenian record, he took up his solitary abode in a mountain cavern, apart from all men, where he lived "more like an incorporate cherub than a carnal creature"—though whether those who shun their fellow-creatures, live in holes like foxes, feed on raw roots, and wear unwashed garments, more resemble cherubs, and better serve their Maker, than men who are thankful for the blessings Providence has placed at their disposal, and live among their brethren, with clean skins, decent clothes, and wholesome food—is a question that need not here be argued at length. The Eastern churches generally agree with the Romish in this particular, and account dirt, solitude and maceration, exalted virtues—"as if," as Archdeacon Jortin says in reference to Papistry, "piety and filth were synonymous; and religion, like the itch, could be caught by wearing foul clothes!" Mahommed had more sense than to approve of this doctrine.

The Armenian Church separated from the Greek Church of Constantinople, in the sixth century, on a dispute concerning the nature of Christ; the former holding the Jacobite doctrine of His divine and human nature being monophysite or united in one; while the latter, like most other Christian churches, holds His divinity to be distinct from His humanity.

The Armenians, of course, disown the authority of the Pope of Rome, and are governed by their

own patriarchs, the chief of whom resides at Echmiazin, not far from Mount Ararat.* Under the patriarchs, are bishops, and priests or regular clergy, and secular clergy, as in the Greek Church. The patriarchs and bishops are obliged to observe strict celibacy, but the priests are allowed to marry one wife, and in the event of her death, they cannot take another.

They hold with the Greek Church, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only, not from the Son; and acknowledge seven sacraments. They maintain confession to priests and absolution of sins; but disallow indulgences, dispensations, and works of supererogation; and reject the doctrine of purgatory. Sins are easily disposed of: a small fee to the priest, and a light penance of reading over a few psalms, will atone for many of the worst trespasses; and if these sins are duly confessed and atoned for, they consider the Christian character in no way compromised by their commission.

They pray to deceased saints, and reverence pictures of the blessed, of which their churches are full; but they have no images, and use no instrumental music. They baptize by plunging the child thrice into water, which they believe cancels all original sin; and afterwards anoint with consecrated oil; by which ceremony the

* The chief patriarchal chair was transferred from Sis to Echmiazin in 1440, and has since continued at the latter place.

infant is supposed to be born anew of the Spirit.

The Eucharist in both kinds is administered to the laity. They communicate, having the bread dipped in the wine, and believe in the transubstantiation, or rather consubstantiation (if there is any difference) of the elements, but pay no particular homage to them. Their church service is much like that of the Roman and Greek churches; consisting chiefly of psalms, hymns and supplicatory prayer, with burning of frankincense and tinkling of bells. Mass should be performed daily, but this is not done at Julfa. They content themselves with matins and vespers daily, and perform mass only on the Sabbaths and saints' days. Their liturgy is, I believe, entirely in the ancient Armenian tongue, and consequently quite unintelligible to the bulk of the congregation. They seldom have anything like a sermon or lecture delivered to the people: there is no homily, no regular preaching, no exposition of doctrine, no exhortation or reproof, no proclaiming of the glad tidings of the Gospel to the people, who are left utter strangers to the living and justifying faith in Christ, which overcometh the world.

They have many festivals and fasts; the latter of which are observed with far greater rigour than in the Romish Church. The Armenians are not allowed to eat fish or any animal product,

such as eggs, milk, butter, &c.; but are obliged to live on vegetables only.

They hold that when our Lord descended into hell, after His crucifixion, He liberated from torment all the souls of the condemned, who remain reprieved until the Day of Judgment, when they shall receive their final sentence of condemnation. The souls of the blessed repose until that day, when they shall be received into Paradise.

They have no proper sense of our Saviour's atonement for mankind; nor do they pray for forgiveness in His name and for His sake. However flagrantly wicked a man's life may have been: if he shall merely say "I repent," and afterwards take the sacrament, he is held to be absolved of all sin, and an heir of salvation. Our Lord is no longer regarded as a Mediator and Intercessor for us, but as a severe and rigid Judge, whose mercy must be propitiated by the intercession of the saints, and of the Virgin Mary in particular.

The Armenians entertain more charity and less bigotry, than the Roman Catholics and some other Christian sects profess. Papists, it is well known, hold their church to be infallible, and that there is no salvation for any without its pale. Armenians do not consider their church absolutely infallible; and are not so prone to condemn all other Christian communities.

Many Armenians consider oaths in a court of justice unlawful; and it has frequently happened that a man has paid a debt, falsely sworn against him, rather than swear that no such claim existed.

CHAP. XXV.

Ispahan.—Its Gardens.—Palace of Chihl Sitoon.—Chehâr Bâgh.—Khaledon.—Manners, &c. of the Ispahanees. — College of Shah Hosein.—Persian Education.

The Mahomedan city of Ispahan lies on the north side of the river Zayinderood, and is near two miles distant from Julfa, but connected by suburbs, and by an immense avenue and causeway, planted with trees, and bordered by gardens and mansions, called the Chehâr Bâgh or "four gardens." The two portions of this avenue, extending on both sides of the river, are connected by the bridge of Allaverdy Khan, named after one of the generals of Shah Abbas, who superintended its erection; a very handsome bridge of stone, in thirty-three arches, over which are ninety-nine smaller arches above the roadway on both sides, enclosing a covered-in trottoir for foot passengers. The roadway in the centre is perfectly level, and well paved with stone; and the whole bridge is admirably built. The banks of the river were here so completely covered with webs of chintz and cotton stuffs of all colours,

which the people were busy washing and bleaching, that the ground looked like a patchwork coverlet. In the centre of the bridge are alcoves on either side, in one of which, a seller of fruit, bread, maust, and other *hâziree* (victuals not requiring cooking) had established himself; and in the opposite one was a *kaleon-furoosh* or " vender of smoke " (as Hajji Baba calls himself) who keeps a number of pipes constantly in readiness; and lets them out for immediate use, to all wayfarers and chance customers who may desire the refreshment of a whiff of tobacco, for a trifling remuneration in copper.

At the north end of the bridge is a gateway where a guard is stationed; and passing through this, I entered the *pâyeen* or lower division of the Chehâr Bâgh, a beautiful avenue divided in terraces, gradually rising one above another as the road recedes from the bridge, and planted on both sides with double rows of very old and immensely large chenâr trees. On each side of the avenue lie four large gardens, collectively named the Hasht Bihist or " Eight paradises," each of which once contained a fine palace; but all of these buildings, with one exception, are now in ruins. Eight handsome gateways — arranged in pairs, one opposite to the other, at intervals — open upon the Chehâr Bâgh, and lead into these several gardens; and between every two gates, is an octangular tank of water, occupying the centre of the avenue; whence channels paved with stone,

convey the water along the entire length of the alley; the centre channel connecting the several tanks by a continuous stream flowing from the upper to the lower. The eight gates are elegantly constructed, with galleries and chambers above the doorways; the large arches of which are decorated with lacquered tilework, painting and enamelling, now unfortunately sadly broken and decayed. No one takes the least care of this fine approach to the city; and it seems that anybody is entitled to perpetrate whatever amount of damage he may think fit, without let or hindrance.

The soldiers in the guardhouse at the entrance, when in want of firewood, make no scruple of taking an axe and cutting a huge cantle out of any of the magnificent old trees, planted by Shah Abbas: a piece of wanton destruction, for which I should not be sorry to see some of them suspended from the topmost branches. I entered the garden, containing the only entire palace. The ground is laid out in parterres planted with orange, pomegranate and other fruit trees, and divided by walks lined with rows of the cypress and chenâr. The imâret, which is very spacious and in tolerably good condition, was built in Shah Suleimân's time; but its present internal decorations are of more recent date. It contains one large hall, with a gallery above leading round, and divided off into numerous rooms; the whole being ornamented in the usual Persian fashion.

In the hall there are two huge paintings of Fat,h Alee Shah; one representing that monarch seated in state, surrounded by several of his sons and ministers; and the other a hunting piece, in which the king on horseback is depicted spearing a nondescript brute intended for a lion. Among other paintings, there is also a portrait of a European in very fanciful costume, which, I was informed, was meant for a Mr. Strachey, whose likeness I had often seen before. This gentleman, who was an attaché to some former British embassy, was, and is still, considered by the Persians, the very pink and perfection of manly beauty. Nothing like him was ever seen in this country before or since; and his portrait is perpetuated on walls of palaces, on boxes, pencases, enamelled pipe heads, and everything on which ornamental painting is employed — a circumstance which must needs be highly flattering to Mr. Strachey, if he still lives.

From this garden, I went to visit the famous palace of Chihl Sitoon (forty pillars) which is at no great distance; and is certainly the finest edifice of the kind I have seen in Persia. I have endeavoured to describe various similar mansions at Sheerauz, and a short account will suffice for all others. Persian palaces are all much alike — there are the same walled gardens, with straight walks and avenues of tall cypresses — the same stone tanks and water-channels — the same style of building, with coloured tilework

without, and paint and glitter within — and but too often, the same dirt and dilapidation. The Chihl Sitoon stands in the centre of a large square garden, laid out in the usual plats, rows of trees and rivulets of water. In front is a fine façade of eighteen lofty pillars supporting a gorgeously ornamented roof. Each pillar is inlaid from top to bottom with looking glass arranged in spiral rows, and rests on a pedestal of gray marble sculptured in the semblance of four lions squatted close together. Behind this façade lies an open hall, the side walls of which are inlaid with looking glass, the floor paved with marble, with a cistern of water in the middle, and the roof ornamented with gold and colours in arabesque.

This style of combination of grotesque imagery with brilliant colouring, often exhibits exquisite taste, and the Persians are particularly skilful in this description of ornamental work. It is common to all Mahomedan nations; but some I have seen in this country, is certainly superior to any I have beheld elsewhere. An arched doorway highly decorated, at the back of this hall, leads into the principal apartment, a lofty chamber, nearly thirty yards long and half as broad, adorned in splendid style. The walls are covered with large paintings — better executed than common — representing the acts of various monarchs. Some of these pictures were painted in the time of Abbas the Great, and one exhibits that Shah

at a jovial carousal—a recreation to which he was exceedingly partial—surrounded by guests, some of whom are evidently very tipsy indeed; and attended by musicians and dancing girls. The likeness of Shah Abbas is probably accurate: he is represented as a young man, with a rather stern and harsh countenance, enormous moustaches, and no beard.

Some of the wars of Shah Ishmael with the Turks, and of Nadir Shah with the Emperor of Delhi, occupy a considerable part of the room. The figures in these paintings are all nearly as large as life; and if not very artistically drawn, are at least valuable as portraits; as most of them, without doubt, really are. A number of carpenters and painters were busy repairing damages in this palace; as the Shah is expected to visit Ispahan, with all his court, in the course of two or three months, and will probably take up his quarters here. The side chambers are painted and gilt in a similar fashion, and some of them contain portraits of European ladies and gentlemen in the costume of Queen Elizabeth's time. The roof of the building is flat, and sustained on huge rough-hewn chenâr beams. In front of the palace is a large quadrangular tank of water, from whence the streams irrigating the garden derive their source.

Near the Chihl Sitoon lie the ruins of Shah Abbas's *ferrásh-khoneh* or quarters of the royal tent-pitchers and other menials, which must have

been a very showy building, the exterior having been completely covered with blue *kâshee* tile-work. In the days of the Suffavean kings, Ispahan was a city of palaces; and the imagination of the stranger is apt to conjure up ideas and expectations of a charming picture of magnificence and grandeur of architecture, which the reality of the fallen and ruined state of the old capital speedily dissipates. Whoever visits this city with old Chardin for his guidebook, will be miserably disappointed; for many of the fine palaces and other buildings, so minutely described and highly praised, by that worthy and venerable traveller, have now disappeared so completely that their very sites are no longer known.

From the gardens, I proceeded to the Meidâni Shah, the great square of the city, entering it through the Alee Câpee gate. This is an open space, not quite half a mile in length, and some 200 yards or more in breadth, surrounded with two-storied buildings having open vaulted fronts to both stories. Directly opposite to the Alee Câpee gate, which is on the south-west side, stands the mosque of Lootf Ullah, a large and handsome pile with a dome covered with enamelled tiles, in good condition. Another larger mosque, named the Masjidi Shah, occupies the south-east extremity, with a fine gateway opening on the square. The dome of this mosque is enormous, and has been entirely covered with blue tilework, much of which

is broken and peeled off. I was, of course, unable to inspect the interior of either of these places of worship. At the north-west end, a gate conducts into the chief bazâr, and heart of the city; and over the gate, is a gallery denominated the *nakkâra-khoneh* or orchestra, where formerly a band of music was stationed, to play at stated hours. A paved canal once nearly surrounded the square, supplying the whole place with water, but it is now dry and dilapidated. In the centre of the square stands the *kâpook*, a tall pole, not unlike a maypole, at the foot of which, criminals are put to death or mutilated, as the Governor may direct.

The Alee Câpee gate has five stories, one over another, and is the highest building in Ispahan. Above the gate is an open saloon, in which Shah Abbas used to sit and see his troops reviewed in the square. This has been a handsome room, but is now decayed, tattered and defiled; and the same may be said of the whole edifice. Narrow stairs lead to the summit, whence one has a complete bird's eye view of the entire city. Ispahan is a very extensive straggling place, presenting a scene of a heterogeneous jumble of thickly peopled bazârs — whole streets of ruins — gardens and plantations — barren and desolate spots — few notable buildings in a perfect state, but many in ruins—domed mosques, tall minarets, and vaulted market places — extending over a great part of a sandy plain bounded by bare arid mountains.

Abbas the Great, to whom Persia chiefly owes the finest and most useful buildings — caravansaries, bridges, aqueducts, mosques and colleges — to be seen throughout the land, was a singular character, whose career serves to show how far unbounded license of self-will, aided by unchecked tyrannical power, can debase the noblest intellects. He was, in many respects, an enlightened sovereign; a liberal and enterprizing promoter of improvement, whose constant aim was the advantage of his nation — unlike the mean selfish despots who have sat in his place in later days — kind and conciliatory to foreigners, tolerant of others' religions and prejudices; and so able and vigorous a magistrate, that one might travel unarmed in safety from one end of his dominions to the other. But at the same time, he was a ruthless bloodshedder; his cruelty surpassed even that of other Persian kings; and his domestic history unfolds an incessant sanguinary tragedy. With all this, it must be admitted that under his sway, Persia attained a degree of importance, power, wealth and prosperity, such as the country has never witnessed before or since.

Leaving the great square, I went to see a palace, or rather a house of audience, named the Tâlâr Taveela; consisting of a large open room, some smaller private apartments, and a paved court in front. The Governor of the city often comes hither to transact public business. The rooms are painted and decorated in the usual

fashion; but deserve no particular mention. Neither need I describe the Imâreti Ashraff, a palace at no great distance from the latter, built by Ashraff the Affghan chief, whom Nadir Shah conquered and expelled from Persia. It contains two large apartments, the ornamental work in which is sadly tarnished.

Returning to the great square, I rode into the middle of the city, through an apparently endless succession of crowded bazârs, far better supplied with goods than the bazârs of Sheerauz; and approached the castle of Tabarruk, an unsightly pile, as little worth describing as inspecting; after which, having seen enough for one day, I turned my horse's head homewards, passing on the way through the dark and narrow bazâr of the cotton-dressers; from whose booths, the incessant twang of the cord of the bow, employed in cleaning the cotton, while struck by the wooden mallet, resounded as if a number of harps were in process of being tuned. My way then lay through one of the most melancholy scenes I have ever witnessed; a very large portion of the city, which was utterly destroyed by the Affghan army in 1722—and since that time, the dismal heaps of ruins have never been cleared away or meddled with: they now present the hideous spectacle of miles upon miles of roofless and shattered walls, and shapeless masses of rubbish, arranged in the semblance of streets and squares. A scene such as this, gives me a heart-ache. No such feeling

of depression is excited by the sight of the remains of an ancient city; but a modern town entirely deserted and in ruins, is truly a saddening object. The former is like an ancient mummy, which we can look on without repugnance or disgust; the latter resembles a corpse, which was but lately a living and breathing man. A great portion of this once splendid city, is in a similar condition of abandonment and desolation. As Morier justly observes, "One might suppose that God's curse had extended over parts of it, as it did over Babylon."

Directing my steps towards the bridge which I had crossed before, I came upon a deserted bazâr, which lies nearly parallel with the lower extremity of the Chehâr Bâgh. It is named the Bazâri Boolund, and was erected by Shah Hosein. In structure, it much resembles the Vakeel's bazâr at Sheerauz, but is smaller; and a large caravansary enters off its centre. It is now completely empty, deserted, and going to ruin. Many of the once populous and busy bazârs of Ispahan are partly or wholly untenanted and decaying. They bear evidence to the former wealth and commerce of the city; but their present appearance is doleful in the extreme. The people attribute their decay to *bee-sâhebee* or "want of patronage:" the Kajar dynasty has transferred trade and riches to Tehrân, and the former capital remains a wreck of what it once was.

After crossing the bridge, I went along the *bâla* or upper division of the Chehâr Bâgh, which runs along the east side of Julfa, up to the farther extremity, facing the hill of Sooffa. This division is more than a mile long, and about sixty yards broad; planted, paved, and laid out, very similar to the lower portion. A fine palace stands at each end; and all the way up, at intervals, are seven pairs of handsome imârets, very elegantly built, but unoccupied and in bad repair.*

Ispahan (or, as its name might be more correctly written, Isfahaun) is unquestionably a very ancient city. An attempt has been made to identify it with Ecbatâna, the capital of ancient Media; but the arguments in favour of this supposition are more ingenious than sound. Ecbatâna was probably modern Hamadân; while Ispahan is more likely to have been the Espadâna of Ptolemy. According to Persian geographers, it was founded by Tahmuras the dæmon-binder, who built here four villages, afterwards united in one town by Kei Kobâd, the first monarch of the Keiyânee dynasty, who made it a royal residence. Its modern history is better authenticated. Abbas the Great made it capital of his dominions, trans-

* At the further end of the Chehâr Bâgh is a large piece of land laid out in gardens, named the Hazár Jereeb, which former travellers have described as a beautiful spot. Nought now remains of its beauty: but some tolerably well-watered and productive gardens are still kept up here.

ferring thither the seat of empire from Casveen. He constructed the fine avenues of the Chehâr Bâgh, the Chihl Sitoon palace, the grand mosque of Masjidi Shah, and many other buildings.

Ispahan continued to be the capital of Persia, during the reigns of the long line of the Suffavean family; and since their days, the city has gradually sunk and decayed. Chardin, writing in 1667, states its population to have been then, between 600,000 and 1,100,000 souls. At present, from all I can learn, the population of the entire city does not exceed 120,000. Ispahan has at times suffered greatly from hostile attacks. When Teimour Lung took the city in 1387, he ordered a general slaughter of the inhabitants, and erected a pyramid of more than seventy thousand human heads: and when the Affghans blockaded it in 1722, the unfortunate Ispahanees were reduced to the most dreadful misery. So severe was the famine, that human flesh was eaten by the besieged, after every other edible substance had been consumed; and mothers devoured their own children. To complete the horrors of the siege, after the city had surrendered, a general massacre took place, and was continued for fifteen days.

The air of Ispahan is pure, dry and salubrious. Chardin, who lived here near eleven years, speaks of the climate as delightful.

The Ispahanees are exceedingly proud of their city, and apparently blind to its fallen and

wasted condition.* *Isfahân nisfi jehân*, "Ispahan is half the world," is a common saying; and they have a proverbial couplet —

جهان را اگر اصفهاني نبود
جهان آفرين را جها ني نبود

"If the world had not an Ispahan; the Creator of the universe would have no world worth mentioning!"

Hâkim Shefâ,ee, a poet of this city, has commenced an encomium on his native place, with —

گردون پدرست و مادر ارکان
فرزند به از پدر اصفاهان

"The rolling heaven is the father, and the pillars of the universe the mother; but Ispahan, the child thereof, surpasses the parent."

I need not quote another verse of this precious panegyric.

The real condition of Ispahan is like that of all Mahomedan cities, Mahomedan powers, and, I hope, Mahomedan religion—once great, vigorous and flourishing; now declining rapidly, and pervaded by universal rottenness—presenting a scene in which a little tawdry show struggles feebly with overwhelming desolation and wretchedness — indicating that the time must be near, when these tottering fabrics shall crumble to dust — and

* I have more than once been asked whether our London was really as great and fine a city as Ispahan!

the civilizing enlightenment of the Christian faith shall rise upon the extinct ashes of Islâm.

The Zayinderood river rises in the mountain range, called the Koohi Zerd or "yellow mountain," some farsakhs to the south-west of the city; and flows north-east and then due east. It is a considerable stream; and its channel, where it passes the city, must be about 200 yards in breadth. It does not terminate by joining any lake or other body of water; but after passing Ispahan, it is gradually consumed and lost, the whole of its water being drawn off by the numerous aqueducts irrigating the surrounding country. Nine bridges lead across this river, at Ispahan and its environs; five of which belong to the city, and the remaining four are at a considerable distance to the west. The bridge furthest down the river, is that of Shehristoon at the eastern extremity of the city: above this, is the bridge of Khâjoo, a handsome structure which I shall afterwards mention more particularly; next above this, the bridge of Pooli Joo,ee, a little to the east of the Chehâr Bâgh; then the bridge of Allaverdy Khan, which I have already described; and lastly the bridge of Marnoo, at the west corner of the city, connecting it with the Mahomedan suburb of Marnoo, on the south side, lying west of Julfa.

Another day, I went to visit the *minâri joombân*, or "shaking minarets," one of the greatest curiosities of this place. These minarets are

upon the roof of a mausoleum, situated in the suburb of Khaledon, westward of the city and north of the river. On my way thither, with an Armenian as my guide, I was conducted along the outskirts of the city, through a succession of intricate paths, threading a perfect labyrinth of gardens, fields, and watercourses cut from the river. The gardens were all surrounded with walls, mostly of the description called *cheena*, formed of thick layers of mud. Each layer is about a foot and a half high, and as it dries hard, another is laid upon it, till the wall has attained the height of nine or ten feet. I noticed that the doors of many of these gardens were formed of a single large slab of gray marble, turning on pivots at top and bottom. We passed several pigeon-towers, strange-looking round turrets with perforated domes on the top, resembling gigantic pepper-casters; a style of dovecote unknown at Sheerauz.

The watercourses were all planted along the borders with trees, including two or three species of the *beed* (willow); the *chenâr;* the *kaboodeh* or gray poplar; the *seffeedâr* or white poplar; the *zubâni goonjeshk* (sparrow's tongue) a tree much like an ash, and thus called from the shape of its seeds, which hang in small clusters; and the *senjid*, a species of jujube, not unlike the olive in appearance. All the firewood used in Ispahan, comes from the gardens and plantations, and is rather scarce and dear. The poorer classes

of people burn *tapâleh* or cakes of the dung of cattle, pressed and dried in the sun. At Julfa, firewood usually sells for 4 *shahees* (twopence) the Shahee *man* (between 14 and 15 lbs. avoirdupoise).* Watermills are numerous on the banks of the aqueducts, and their wheels are almost invariably undershot. The windmill seems to be unknown in this country: I have not yet seen one. In some places the quern or handmill is employed. I have seen this primitive implement at Bushire, where it is to be found in every hut.

Khaledon is a small suburb, nearly hidden in orchards and gardens. Here, a little way detached from other buildings, in a small inclosure, stands a vaulted open chamber, constructed in the form of a Saracenic arch, with a flat terraced roof above. In a recess at one end of the chamber, is the tomb of a saint named Sheikh Abdullah; of whom the keeper of the place could tell me nothing, save that he lived and wrought miracles, five hundred years ago. On one side of the flat roof, and at the two corners, stand the famous minarets; a couple of small brick towers, with winding stairs within, so narrow, that though I had no difficulty in getting up, I doubt whether any corpulent man would find it an easy matter to do so. My guide ascended the opposite minaret, and began to shake it by swaying himself

* At Ispahan, the Shahee or Royal *man* is always used, instead of the Tabreez *man* employed at Sheerauz. One Shahee *man* is equal to two Tabreez *mans*.

backwards and forwards: the little turret presently commenced rocking to and fro; and although I kept perfectly still, the one upon which I stood, proceeded to rock in unison with its neighbour. In like manner, when I shook the minaret where I was, the opposite one also shook sympathetically; and I could observe that the entire roof of the mausoleum was agitated at the same time.* This must be owing to some unexplained mystery (a fortuitous one probably) in the construction of the building; but the people, of course, impute it to the sanctity of the grave beneath. Round the top of each minaret is a a small parapet, hardly breast high.

At the distance of a mile or so, west of Khaledon, a hill or rather rock rises abruptly from the plain, named the *âtish-gâh* or "Place of fire;" and is said to have been a sacred resort of the Guebres of old, having had formerly upon it, a fire-temple, erected by King Ardesheer the Long-armed (Artaxerxes Longimanus), the remains of which, I was assured, were still to be seen. I rode to the rocky hill, and walked up it by a winding footpath. On its top, I found the remains of a modern brick building, comprising a number of rooms, all in ruins; and on the very

* Two similar shaking towers formerly existed at Ahmedabad in Guzerat, Presidency of Bombay; but they were thrown down by an earthquake some years ago. They are mentioned, if I remember right, by Capt. Grindlay in his "Scenery of Western India."

summit stands a small circular edifice in eight open arches supporting a domed roof, the greater part of which is broken away. No trace of any ancient building could I descry, except part of a thick wall, a little way below these ruins, made of enormous bricks. From this spot, a fine prospect of the surrounding country presents itself to the view. Up the river, two farsakhs from the city, lies the large village of Linjân, encompassed with cultivated fields. A great deal of rice is grown at this village. I returned home by a different road, leading along the north bank of the river, which I crossed at the bridge of Marnoo.

Ispahan contains as few foreigners as Sheerauz. Except one or two Arabs and an occasional Turk, no stranger resides in the city — a singular contrast to the days when Chardin lived here, when the capital was full of foreign merchants, traders, and artisans, from every quarter of the world. I am the only solitary European in the place, unless my acquaintance, the Roman Catholic padré, can be considered one also, from having been born at Constantinople.

Lootees are numerous here, but they are not as turbulent as in Sheerauz. Rather more than a year ago, the Vazeer of the Governor raised a rebellion with the aid of all the lootees of the city. He had been, at first secretly and afterwards openly, their patron; and when ordered to apprehend some of the worst thieves and

scoundrels of their party, he refused, and put himself at their head. A revolt of a serious nature ensued: several regiments were sent from Tehrân; and after considerable resistance and some bloodshed, the lootees were defeated, and the Vazeer taken and put to death. Such outbreaks are of every day occurrence in this happy land!

Only one regiment is at present quartered in the city. The soldiers lately came hither from Feeroozkooh in Mazanderân.

There are many Jews in Ispahan, but I have not been able to ascertain their number. They are better off and better treated than at Sheerauz; though they must ever be, among Mahomedans, a despised and detested race. Persian historians have asserted that after the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem, a colony of this people was transported hither by Bakht-un-nasser, as they call Nebuchadnezzar.

The Ispahanees give themselves the credit of being a religious people. There are few Soofees among them, and the Bâbee heresy met with little countenance in this quarter. The influence of the moollahs is very great, and that class extremely numerous. A few years ago, there lived here one Seiyid Mahommed Baukir, a famous saint, whose holiness was held in such high esteem, that the people gathered the dust from the impression of his footsteps, and treasured it as a protection from all misfortunes, and a remedy

for all diseases. His tomb is now a great place of resort for prayer and meditation.

Ispahanees are generally civil and polite to strangers; but the prejudice against Christians, and Europeans in particular, is quite as strong here as elsewhere, though seldom evinced by any open or conspicuous demonstration. As the Sheerauzees are notorious for turbulence and blackguardism, so are the Ispahanees for obsequious flattery, deceit and humbug; accomplishments in which all Persians are wonderful adepts; but the citizens of Ispahan surpass the rest of their countrymen in this art. Persians are, one and all, desperate and unfathomable liars. One would suppose that they unanimously concurred in the apothegm of Talleyrand, that language was given to man to enable him to conceal his thoughts. I was told, and by good authority too, that the people of this country are much greater liars than the natives of India. The assertion would appear to involve an impossibility, but I believe it to be true nevertheless. The Persian is more glib and fluent in his falsehoods than the Indian; he is more persuasive and likely to deceive his hearers; and he is also far more ingenious in the fabrication of impromptu stories, and invention of excuses. The Indian, though equally devoid of all appreciation of the truth, is a clumsy liar, and when cross-examined, will contradict himself a hundred times over: his lies are gross and palpable, not varnished over with any semblance of

probability. The Persian is far more subtle and dexterous in the art of lying like truth; he is never without a plausible excuse; and, like Sheridan's Fag, when he draws upon his invention for a good current lie, he can always forge plenty of indorsements as well as the bill.

Another trait in the Persian's character, bearing on this point, is his dislike to confessing ignorance. An Indian, when interrogated on some subject of which he is ignorant, will bluntly admit that he knows nothing about it—the Persian will prefer inventing any number of plausible fictions on the spot, to avowing himself unacquainted with the topic; albeit it may be the Electric Telegraph, the Atmospheric Railway, or any subject of which he cannot form the most distant conception. Of all the noxious weeds that vegetate in the rank soil of the human heart, none seems to flourish so vigorously as falsehood, and none is so difficult to eradicate. There appears to be a peculiar inclination for this odious vice, inherent in man. Children learn to lie without the least previous teaching; and to all, save such as are withheld by better instruction and discipline, the habit comes as naturally as eating or breathing. In the East, the disgusting practice prevails to the highest and most unlimited extent; and nowhere does the pet offspring of the "Father of lies" thrive more completely than in Persia.

Morier's inimitable "Hajji Baba" is a perfect

portraiture of an Ispahanee, and of a Persian in general — a man possessed of great capacity, shrewdness and intelligence, and gifted by nature with warm and kindly feelings — one who, if properly reared, would be an honourable and estimable member of society; but who, breathing from his earliest infancy an atmosphere of villainy, selfishness and fraud, under the debasing influence of his country's manners and government, has degenerated into a mere good-humoured rascal. "Hajji Baba" is by far the best book of the kind that ever was written. It has been compared with "Gil Blas," but, in my humble opinion, is much superior. Le Sage possessed not half the exquisite humour, nor the skill in showing off human nature, which Morier has exhibited in this admirable story. I must admit, however, that no one unacquainted with Persians can fully appreciate "Hajji Baba;" and perhaps my ignorance of the Spanish people may render me blind to some of the merit of "Gil Blas."

The vast straggling city of Ispahan, resembling one dense town surrounded by a great number of fauxbourgs, is nearly twenty miles in circumference; but the whole of the inhabited portion, if brought together, and all ruins and deserted places rejected, might easily be contained within a compass of five miles. The chief part of the city was formerly enclosed by walls; parts of which remain; and fourteen gates are still to be seen. Ispahan contains thirty-two *mehallas*

(wards or parishes); twelve large mosques and many more small places of worship; thirteen colleges; and eighteen large public baths and some smaller ones — a sad falling off since Chardin's time, when there were 162 mosques, 48 colleges, and 273 public baths. The bazârs are numerous and extensive: they are all covered in with roofs; and so united together as to resemble one immense market, branching in every direction. They exhibit a showy variety of goods and merchandize; but in point of architecture, there is not one of them that can compare with the Vakeel's Bazâr at Sheerauz. The finest of them, is the bazâr of Abbas the Great, leading off from the Meidâni Shah. Most of the shops are closed all Friday; a piece of "unco guidness" on the part of the Ispahanees; for in Sheerauz, as well as in the cities of other Moslem lands, the shops are usually opened on that day, after the noon's service in the mosques.

The streets of Ispahan are fully as ugly as those of Sheerauz—narrow, crooked, ill paved or unpaved, and filthy; and in the city's best days, they never could have been otherwise.

The pigeon-towers, which are numerous in the fields and gardens on both sides of the river, are the most singular structures I have seen in this country. These are high round towers, slightly tapering upwards, with several small pointed domes on the top, full of apertures, by which the pigeons enter. The exterior of the tower is

usually whitewashed and painted with fanciful cornices, and all manner of strange devices; producing a quaint and picturesque effect. These towers are designed for the purpose of collecting the pigeon's dung, as manure for the melon gardens. The whole interior of the tower is divided into thousands of little triangular niches, in which the pigeons make their nests and rear their young. A few domesticated pigeons are first put into a tower, and they soon attract the wild ones, which come in myriads, and establish themselves in the domiciles prepared for them. They are all of a slaty blue colour, like our common wood-pigeon. The only entrance for man, into the pigeon-tower, is a door or rather hole near the bottom, which is closed up with a shutter or stone slab fastened in, and remains shut for the greater part of the year, during the periods of incubation and fledging of the young; and when opened, the bottom of the tower is found filled with the precious manure to the depth of several feet. Morier tells us that a pigeon-tower will rent for 100 tomâns yearly, for the sake of the manure; but I do not hear of any now fetching so high a revenue. The melon growers generally hire them for thirty or forty tomâns, or even less. I have seen in Egypt, pigeon-houses constructed something on a similar plan, but on a much smaller scale.

Garden land within the precincts of the city, generally pays no tax to government, though

some of it is taxed. This land is very valuable, and if well planted with vines and fruit trees, will sell as high as 80 and 100 tomâns a *jereeb.** Outside the city, land of every description pays tax; and if fertile and well watered, sells for 20 tomâns a *jereeb:* inferior kinds sell for 5 tomâns or even less. A great part of the land is irrigated by channels cut from the river. Private gardens are watered from wells, by means of the leathern bucket drawn by a bullock, which I described at Sheerauz.

The entire *mâliyât* of Ispahan and all the *bulooks* and villages attached to it, amounts to nearly 300,000 tomâns per annum; of which more than three fourths are collected from the *bulooks.* The revenue of the city itself is 68,000 tomâns; and of this, 40,000 are derived from taxes on trades, professions, grounds &c., and 28,000 from the customs. There is no house-tax here. A *jizyeh* or polltax is paid by the Jews and Armenians, but it is not heavy: the Armenians of Julfa pay 1000 tomâns a year. The municipal economy and police of this city are so much the

* The *Jereeb* is a measure of land varying greatly in different places. A gardener here, at my inquiry, defined the Ispahanee *jereeb* as follows: —

A *nei* or rod, consists of 5 *zera*, 1 *girih*, and 1 *bahr* = 17 feet.
4 *nei* long, by 1 broad = 1 *kafeez.*
10 *kafeez* = 1 *jereeb.*

The *jereeb* of Ispahan is consequently not quite a third of an English acre.

same as at Sheerauz, as to require no particular notice.

The manufactures of Ispahan have greatly fallen off since the city ceased to be the capital of the kingdom; still a large proportion of the inhabitants is employed in handicraft labour. Silks and satins are made here, and quantities of cotton stuffs, particularly the *kadak* a strong cloth, used for coats and trousers. The *zeree* or fine gold brocade, for which Ispahan was once famous, is very rarely manufactured now: the people are too poor to purchase it. The beautiful patchwork called *koolláb-doozee*, used for saddle-covers * and other ornamental purposes, is occasionally made at Ispahan; but it is by no means equal to that manufactured at Resht on the south coast of the Caspian.

Though many articles are made very tastefully and ingeniously in this country, Persian workmen in general are by no means neat-handed. Ordinary carpenter's and blacksmith's work is coarse and rudely executed; and very far inferior to that of Indian artisans.

The sword-cutlers of Ispahan formerly enjoyed great celebrity; and numbers of swords are still

* This saddlecover, called *zeen-poosh* or *ghásheeya*, is a richly ornamented cloth, covering the horse's back from neck to crupper. The groom carries it thrown over his arm; and when his master dismounts to pay a visit, he spreads it over the saddle, and walks the horse about, till the master is ready to remount.

manufactured here. The best blades are all made of Indian steel, imported in the form of small round cakes, which cost about two tomâns each. Old Persian swords will fetch very high prices, all over the East; for they cannot now-a-days fabricate blades equal to those of former ages. There lived at Ispahan, in the time of Abbas the Great, a cutler named Assad-Ullah, whose blades are as famous throughout Asia, as those of Andrea Ferrara in Europe; and if known to be genuine, will now sell for more than their weight in gold; but many common swords have Assad-Ullah's name forged upon them. Khorassan was also famous for its swords, some centuries ago. When Teimour Lung conquered and took Damascus, he carried off all the celebrated cutlers of that city, and settled them in the towns of Khorassan, where they and their descendants, for long, fabricated weapons of surpassing excellence. Good blades are full of the pattern of dark wavy lines, called *jowher* or "damask," produced by crystallization of the steel; and from the arrangement and closeness of this pattern, the quality may be known. A well crystallized blade will tingle like a bell, when struck with any hard substance; and with a bit of gold, one may write his name upon it.

The stories told of the trenchant powers of certain famous swords exceed all belief. Such performances are attributed to them, as fully rival the marvellous feats of the fairy-wrought

falchions of heroes of ancient romaunts. Persian swords are not so much curved as the Turkish. When the blade has been hammered out of the *koors* or cake of Indian steel, it is put in the furnace, and kept there all night, subjected to the action of a low fire. In the morning, it is taken out, smoothed, and filed into shape, and then heated red-hot, and immersed for a few moments in a trough filled with castor oil. It is next polished, sharpened, and the hilt and scabbard fitted to it; and the last thing done, is to bring out the *jowher* or damask pattern. For this purpose, the blade is perfectly cleansed from oil or grease; and a yellow kind of stone* is ground to powder, mixed with hot water in a cup, which must be of china or glass, not metal, and the solution laid on over the blade with a piece of cotton, two or three times: this exhibits the black *jowher* perfectly. The scabbards of Persian swords are all made of thin laminæ of wood, joined together and covered with black leather, with a sort of pattern stamped on the outside. They are generally quite plain; but a few intended for princes, are mounted with gold and jewellery. Many Persians are very skilful swordsmen; but their mode of handling the

* What this stone is, I do not know. It is brought from the westward, and seems to be common and by no means expensive. I got a large mass of it for a *keroonee*. It is of a bright yellow colour, like sulphur, and looks like the ore of some metal. It appears to be full of a very astringent acid; and it is called *zâji shâmee*, a name signifying "Syrian vitriol."

weapon is quite different from ours. Their method of cutting, is rather carving than striking; and they never give what we would call a downright blow. Swordsmanship is a part of the education of some, from their earliest years; and by long practice, they acquire great dexterity.

Daggers are worn by many persons, and are also made here. These are of two kinds — the *khanjer*, a curved double-edged dirk, stuck in the girdle on the right side—and the *kârd*, a straight single-edged pointed knife, worn on the left side. A favourite weapon with military men is the *kummeh*, a sort of cutlass, much like the ancient Roman sword; with a straight double-edged pointed blade, about a foot and a half long, and nearly three inches broad.

Firearms are manufactured in Ispahan, but not in any great quantity. The best gun-barrels are brought from Georgia, and they are fitted here with common English flint musket locks, and stocks of coarse walnut, or *cheet* wood.* Long single-barrelled guns and pistols are also made here, but the workmanship is very coarse, and they are proportionately cheap. The percussion system is little known, except to a few of the higher classes, who are fond of English guns when they can get them. The Persians usually carry the gun slung at the back; and all its apparatus is borne in a *keesa,e kemer* or waist

* The *cheet* is the curled maple, commonly used in America for stocking rifles. It grows in Mazanderan and Geelan.

girdle. This is a leather belt fastened round the middle, to which are attached two or three pouches for ball, shot, materials for striking a light, and other odds and ends; a large powder-flask made of thick untanned hide as hard as horn; and a smaller flask, generally of metal, containing fine powder for priming. They make tolerably good powder, but of coarse grain: bullet-moulds are ordinarily constructed of stone; and shot is mostly imported from Europe, as well as flints.

In days when archery was employed in war and the chase — and it has not been abandoned more than a century — the bows of Ispahan were greatly esteemed; but now that the bow is used by very few, and only for amusement, none are manufactured here. The *tarkash-dooz* or "quiver-makers" now embroider saddles and other articles of leather, for there is no longer any demand for quivers. All manner of leathern work is well executed at Ispahan. The green high-heeled shagreen slippers made here, are the best in Persia; and they also make tolerably good shoes on the European plan, which are now coming much into fashion. Saddles and horse furniture of all kinds, are manufactured in the best style; but the fashion is wholly different from ours. The process of making the *nei-peech* or long pliant snake-tubes for the *kaleon*, is a neat and curious branch of leather-work. Fine wire is wound round a straight rod about as thick as

one's little finger, and covered with a strip of thin leather, fastened lengthways with a very tenacious glue, called *sereesh*, made from the root of a plant.* The exterior is then bound with fine wire; and when dried, the rod is drawn out. These tubes, which are exceedingly flexible and delicate, are made very cheap, a snake fourteen or fifteen feet long costing two *keroonees*.

I am no judge of precious stones; but good ones seem to be scarce and dear. The real turquoise is found only in Persia, at Nishapoor in Khorassan, and I had hopes of getting some fine specimens of this gem; but all that have been brought me, were of very inferior quality, and high-priced.

Ispahan is famous for fruit, especially for its melons, which are the finest in the country. At this season, the only fruits to be seen are such as will keep; and of these, immensely large quinces are the most remarkable. Sweetmeats, of the same kinds as I have noticed at Sheerauz, are sold in every bazâr, and consumed in vast quantities. One kind, the *gezangabeen* or manna of the tamarisk, is made here in perfection; but though generally highly esteemed, it is not at all to my taste. The manna is found in several places near Ispahan; but the greatest quantity is brought from Khonsar, to the north-west. In the course of the autumn, it falls like dew, during the night, upon the leaves of the tama-

* This plant, I believe, is a species of Asphodel. The root is dried and powdered.

risk plants *, and is collected by the people in the morning. The ground beneath the bushes is swept clean, and cotton cloths spread over it: the bushes are then well shaken, and the manna, which is white like snow, falls off and is collected in the cloths. It is passed through a sieve to clear it of dirt and dried leaves, and sent into the markets of Ispahan, where it sells for 16 *keroonees* à Shahee *man* — nearly a shilling a pound. It is made into small round cakes, sometimes mixed up with split almonds and pistachio nuts. Two medicinal kinds of manna, called the *sheer-khisht* and the *toorun-jabeen*, are found, in a like manner, on the leaves of trees, in some parts of the country. They are both used as purgatives.

Among other products of this city, I must not forget to mention the beautiful cats, which have become well known and prized in the civilized world. The *boorrauk* is larger than a common cat, and has long hair, and a bushy tail like a fox's brush. It is a handsome creature, and much more docile and tractable than the ordinary breed of pussies.

A few days after my arrival, I paid my respects to Cherâgh Alee Khan, the present Deputy Governor of the city—the Governor himself being in disgrace at Tehrân, and not likely to return hither. He resides in a very pretty small palace,

* The *gez* is a small tamarisk, called *athl* in Arabia and Egypt.

within the city, named the Sar Poosheeda, built not many years ago by Sooltân Mahommed Mirza, surnamed the *seif-ud-dowlet* (Sword of the State), a son of King Fat,h Alee Shah. I found Cherâgh Alee Khan very courteous and polite, but without ceremony or constraint in his manners. He was plainly attired, and from his appearance I should have taken him for a petty merchant or shopkeeper. There is nothing dignified or commanding in his aspect; and his countenance is plain, swarthy, and much pitted with smallpox. He is tolerably well liked as governor, and is a strict magistrate; but like all his countrymen, has an itching palm.

After the usual quantum of conversation, coffee and kaleons; as I took my leave, he desired a servant to show me through the palace, and I accordingly inspected every part, except the ladies' quarters. From having been so recently erected, this mansion possesses the novel charm of being in perfect repair. The rooms are small, but elegant: the principal apartment is a handsome hall, the centre of which is occupied by a raised cistern of fine marble; out of which rise pillars inlaid with looking-glass, reaching to the roof. The pedestal of each pillar is formed of four human figures carved in marble. The sculpture is well executed, and the marble partly translucent, like the finest alabaster. Beyond this apartment, is a saloon, the walls of which are completely inlaid with mirrors, fitting together.

The *ooroosee* opens upon a large court, where the people assemble; and here the Deputy Governor transacts business. The other rooms are painted and gilded in the usual style.

Another day, I visited the college of Shah Hosein, situated in the centre of the lower division of the Chehâr Bâgh, on the east side. This college was founded, some say, by the mother of Shah Abbas; but it is usually named after the unfortunate Hosein, who rebuilt it. It is the handsomest college I have seen. At the entrance there is a fine porch of marble, within which is a gate in two divisions, covered with silver, embossed in patterns, verses of the Koran, &c. This gate is protected from the hands of depredators by another door which closes over it at night. These gates lead into the square, round which the college is built, laid out in garden-plots, and containing several trees, with a channel for water. On one side of the square, stands a mosque built of marble, with a large dome ornamented with tilework, much of which is broken and stripped off. The rest of the building contains rooms for students and halls for lectures, built in two stories; and the whole is faced with large slabs of Yezd and Tabreez marble, with cornices of enamelled tiles. If put in a thorough state of repair, this would be a truly beautiful edifice.

The marble of Yezd is commonly of a pale yellow colour, sometimes striped yellow and white;

but some of it is very fine, and perfectly white. The substance called Tabreez marble, is in fact a petrifaction found in marshes beside the lake of Ooroomia, lying west of Tabreez; where it hardens like ice, and gradually forms in flakes. It is generally of a greenish colour, streaked with veins of red and yellow. Some have asserted that the belief of its being a concrete is erroneous; and that it is really a kind of marble, not formed by the water; but Morier, who visited the lake, saw it in process of petrifaction.

There were only thirty students resident in this college. The head *mudarris* (teacher or lecturer), Seiyid Abdul-Ghanee, who is a *mujtehid* or high authority among the moollahs of the city, received me very civilly, and conducted me to his rooms, where we conversed for some hours. I found him a sensible and intelligent man, free from the dogmatism, pride, and bigotry which characterize most of his class. He expressed a wish to have the Persian version of our Bible; and accordingly when I got home I sent him two copies; one for himself, and the other as *wakf* or offering to the library of the college. "Bread cast upon the waters" may not return or nourish any soul, within the immediate range of our sight and knowledge; yet we may hope that some of the seed scattered at random, may not be lost.

The education of young Persians, we should consider a very defective one; not that it is by any means neglected, for they are kept harder at

work than English boys, and their tasks are no trifles; but they receive little useful instruction, and are taught an infinity of learned rubbish. Their faulty system of education is the more to be regretted, for they appear to be quick of apprehension, have tenacious memories, and would doubtless do credit to proper tuition. Their manners are strictly attended to from the earliest period, and in behaviour they are complete little men. A boy of nine or ten will conduct himself towards guests and strangers, with all the dignified politeness and ceremony of a full-grown man; and on no occasion will he exhibit any of the awkward shyness and rudeness common to European lads of the same age. A boy has the run of the *zenâna*, till he reaches the period termed the *sinni shu,oor* (years of knowledge) or *haddi takleef* (limit of ceremonies)*, after which, his own sisters and female relatives are, in a manner, strangers to him, and he never beholds their faces, except by stealth. The habits of the Persians are essentially military; and a boy of the better class is taught to ride, to handle a sword, and to shoot at full gallop, while he is yet learning to read and write —

> "The antique Persians taught three useful things —
> To draw the bow, to ride, to speak the truth."

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* The first term needs no explanation; the second indicates that the lad has come to an age when he is bound to observe all the ceremonies prescribed by his religion — the stated prayers, the lustrations, fasting, &c., which are not absolutely binding on a child of tender years.

So sings Lord Byron. The moderns, I should say, are taught to ride, to shoot with the gun, and to speak — anything but the truth; for in the formation of their polite manners, they are carefully instructed in the arts of flattery, wheedling and dissimulation, till they are complete adepts at intrigue in all its branches.

The studies of grown youths in college, are chiefly law and religion, without any attempt at general information. Their philosophy is entirely speculative and metaphysical—more of the school of Plato than of Bacon — consisting of doubtful dogmas and vague theories, destitute of any practical utility.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ispahan and its Suburbs.—Ruins of Ferrahâbâd.—The Karachees or Gypsies.—Sa,âdetabâd.—Shehristoon.—The Persian Language.—Mode of Travelling by Post.

Upon the slope of the mount of Sooffa, overlooking the Armenian burying-ground, stands a summer house, now ruined, formerly a resort of the Governors of Ispahan. It includes a range of small apartments, surmounted by an octagonal pavilion, the latter of which is still in a tolerable state of preservation. Behind rises a huge perpendicular rock, the base of which has been partly cut away where the building stands; and just in the rear of the row of lower rooms, is a spring of water, beside which grow two fine chenâr trees. The spot affords a good view of the city and banks of the river.

Upon the plain, nearly a mile north-west of the mount and pavilion of Sooffa, lie the extensive remains of Ferrahâbâd;' once a beautiful suburb, as large as its neighbour Julfa, and a favourite resort of the nobles of the Persian

court. Here Shah Hosein had a splendid palace, of which scarce a trace remains. The ground is occupied by long streets of desolate and hideous ruins; often serving as lurking-places for thieves, who sally forth by night to rob unwary travellers. South of these melancholy ruins, rises a high precipitous mountain, on the summit of which is perched a ruin, called the Takhti Rustam after the hero of Persian romance. After a long scramble up the side facing the city, I gained the top; from whence I beheld a most extensive panorama of the country, on every side, fully recompensing my trouble in climbing up. Except along the course of the river, the scenery is perfectly dreary and bare. The ruin is that of a comparatively modern building of brick, which could not have been erected more than two centuries ago; and it comprises two small rooms with whitewashed walls, and nearly roofless. The mass of rock upon which it is built, is perforated through by a natural cavity. I was surprized to find upon the white walls, the names of several Hindoos, written in the Indian Nagaree character.

In Chardin's time, and long after, there was a large number of Indian merchants and traders resident at Ispahan — now there is not a single one. If Rustam loved a fine prospect and fresh air, his taste must here have been fully gratified; but I doubt whether Eerân's invincible champion was ever at this spot. In Scotland,

we have Wallace towers and Wallace caves, in places where the stalwart knight of Ellerslie never was in his life; and the name of Rustam, like that of the Scottish patriot, is to be found scattered all over his native land. I descended the hill, a bare rocky height, partly covered with patches of snow, on the opposite side; and near the foot of the southern face, found a cavern, partly natural and partly excavated, containing a small building, called the *tannoor* or oven, shaped like an inverted teacup, and so low that I could not stand upright in it: and there are also several remains of stone buildings near the spot. Here, it is said, the Hindoos were wont to burn their dead; and the Karachees or Gypsies still come hither at times to perform some occult ceremonies, the nature of which no one knows.

The Karachees — in some parts called Kawulee and Soosmânee — are unquestionably gypsies. They wander about the country, and their habits are the same as those of this singular people elsewhere. The men are tinkers, basket-weavers, dealers in cattle, sheep-stealers, and thieves; but their women, in one respect, differ widely from gypsy females in Europe. Mr. Borrow, in his account of this extraordinary race — the best, and indeed the only good account we have—has commended the strict and universal chastity of the gypsy women; but the Kurachee ladies of Persia are quite independent of any such rigid virtue; and one and all earn money in other ways than

by telling fortunes. These people speak Persian, but much mixed up with old Sanskrit words and phrases, which, though here understood by none but themselves, would, I believe, be perfectly intelligible to any gypsy of Hungary, Spain, or Epping Forest. Like gypsies of other countries, they have no idea of their origin, or from what land they came forth.

Near the cavern is a recess containing a stone tank, having a nearly obliterated Armenian inscription round its brim; and filled with water which percolates through the rock above, and runs out in a slender stream into the plain below.

On the south bank of the river, a little way eastward of the Chehâr Bâgh, is the palace of Sa,âdetabâd, which I visited a few days ago. This palace was built by Shah Tahmasp, the last of the Suffavean kings, and somewhat resembles the Chihl Sitoon; having an open façade, with a flat roof supported on twelve pillars inlaid with mirrors; and ornamented chambers within. It has fallen into a state of great dilapidation; but is now undergoing repair, against the Shah's intended visit. Behind it, and in the same garden, is a pavilion called the Namakdân or Salt-cellar, consisting of an open polygonal hall below, and some rooms above, much tattered and tarnished; and which is also being put in a state of repair.

The garden of Sa,âdetabâd is surrounded with

ruins. Just beside it, extends a tract of ground, covered with masses of ruin, named the Haft Dest or "Seven suites," where formerly stood seven stately palaces, each surrounded with a fine garden. Of these, only one remains, within two or three minutes' walk of the palace of Sa,âdeta-bâd. This suite comprises a palace, two stories high, containing a vast number of apartments, none very large or handsome, built round a court laid out in garden-beds. The whole is in a very decent state of preservation. One of the chambers in the lower story, ornamented with a Tabreez marble *hizâra* (or skirting) daubed with flowers, and a cistern of marble in the floor, has a raised dais under the ooroosee, approached by a few steps; and on this spot, died Fat,h Alee Shah, on the 23rd of October, 1834, in the 78th solar (or 80th lunar) year of his age, and 38th of his reign. Peace to the memory of an avaricious, crafty, voluptuous, but peace-loving and humane old despot!

The gardener brought me a nosegay of a very pretty small species of lily, of a dark violet colour, with a fragrant smell. It is called the *eelchee soosun* or "lilies ambassador," as it makes its appearance a full month before any of the rest of the lily tribe put forth their blossoms. This, with the narcissus, and the scented buds of the *beed-mishk* (musk-willow or palms), are the first harbingers of Spring at Ispahan.

Close to this palace, is the Pooli Joo,ee or

"Bridge of the stream," leading over the Zayinderood; so called because a water-channel, high above the level of the river, runs along it, communicating from bank to bank. The channel occupies the centre of the roadway of the bridge, which has no parapet or balustrade of any kind.

Among the ruins of the Haft Dest are many small cultivated fields, and plots of ground. Wheat, lettuce, and spinach were appearing above ground, as well as a kind of field-pea, called *girgeroo*, on which sheep are fed. Cotton is here an annual plant. The seed is sown in Spring, and twenty days after, the young plant appears. Previous to sowing, the ground is levelled and dug with a spade, not ploughed; and the seed is soaked in water, and rubbed in fine sand. After the seed is sown, a little sand is mixed with the earth sprinkled over it, and the ground well watered; and when the young shoot has made its appearance, fine earth is sprinkled over it, and the watering repeated. When the plant has grown up and flowered, the top is cut off to prevent its spreading too rapidly; and it is watered every ten days till the pods are formed. The pods ripen in the end of Summer and beginning of Autumn, and are then plucked; the first ripened being always the fullest and best. After all the pods have been gathered, the plant is pulled up by the root for fuel.

The greater part of the land round Ispahan is the property of the State, and is farmed out to

cultivators on the following terms. The Government bears the expense of watering and manuring the soil, and furnishes seed-corn to the cultivator, who has nothing to provide, except the oxen and plough. When the harvest is gathered in, one fourth of the crop goes to the cultivator, and three fourths to the State. When land which is farmed for a rent in money * (as many of the gardens are) is let out to any Armenian, he is generally obliged to pay much more than a Mussulman. One man informed me that he paid a rent of two tomâns and a half, per *jereeb*, for land, which the year before had been let to a Mussulman at the rate of one tomân. The case of these poor Christians seems a hopeless one. Any valuable property they may possess, is commonly wrested from them by fraud or violence; and heavy exactions neutralize any attempt to better their fortunes by trade or agriculture.

From the Haft Dest, I rode down the bank of the river, as far as Shehristoon; to see a singular minaret of great height and antiquity, said to have been erected in days of old, by the Guebres. The bridge of Shehristoon is substantially built, but not in good repair, and the roadway is somewhat narrow; by this I crossed to the northern bank. Shehristoon was formerly a flourishing suburb, in which many of the principal people of Ispahan had their houses and gardens. Chardin

* In this case, the renter generally provides everything himself, and pays so much annually for the use of the soil.

describes it as series of gardens and villas, extending for nearly a league along the river. Here was born the famous Ameer Joomla; who, visiting India as a mere adventurer, became the friend, and eventually the rival of the emperor Aurengzebe. Of the once fashionable suburb, not a trace remains, save a number of melancholy ruins.

The village, which stands on high ground, a little way off the river, consists of a very few wretched houses, inhabited by peasants who cultivate a small portion of the land, once covered with fine orchards and parterres of flowers. Here stands a quadrangular diamond-shaped brick building, with a large cupola; strongly built, and evidently very old; and close beside it rises the tall minaret, constructed of brick in the most substantial manner, upon stone foundations. It is said to be the loftiest in or near Ispahan, except one within the city, which is a few feet higher. On two sides of this minaret, small apertures give entrance; and two flights of winding stairs, intertwisting like a double screw, conduct up to the top. Morier tells us that the stairs are so much decayed, that it is impossible to attain the summit; but though they had evidently never been repaired, I found no difficulty in getting up; ascending by one flight, and descending by the other. The situation of this tower is too low to afford much of a view. Whether it was really erected by the fire-worship-

pers, I am unable to say; but I do not think it can possibly be as old as the time of the Moslem conquest. It may nevertheless be the work of Guebres, as many of this race inhabited Ispahan, at no distant date; though, I am informed, there is not now a single one in the city. I returned along the north bank, and entering the city, crossed over by the bridge of Khâjoo, lying midway between the Pooli Joo,ee and bridge of Shehristoon.

The bridge of Khâjoo has been very handsome, but is now rather out of repair. It is built much on the same plan as the bridge of Allaverdy Khan, but is much smaller *; as the river at this point narrows considerably, and falls over a ledge of rock, forming a low cascade. A great part of this bridge is constructed of marble; and the whole of the upper portion has been gaily ornamented with *kâshee* inlaying, but little of which is now extant. The parapets, like those of the larger bridge, enclose a covered-in way for foot-passengers; and at each end, and in the centre, are two pavilions or lodges, once prettily decorated, but at present dismantled and broken. A favourite minister of Fat,h Alee Shah laid out and constructed a fine avenue, similar to the Chehâr Bâgh, leading from this bridge into the

* Chardin gives the dimensions of these bridges as follows. The bridge of Allaverdy Khan is 360 paces long, by 30 broad: that of Khâjoo is 166 paces long, by 24 broad.

city; but it has since been neglected and greatly disfigured.

On the south side of the river, just beyond the Haft Dest, and lying on the east side of the upper Chehâr Bâgh, is an extensive tract, named the Takhti Foolâd, the greater part of which is occupied by a Moslem burying-ground. A small village lies in one corner; and when passing by the little village school, I observed some boys amusing themselves with a game, which I have often played in my schoolboy days, with the hucklebones of sheep *, which are tossed up and caught on the back of the hand. The game is a very ancient one, but I have not seen it in the East before. I remember a piece of Grecian sculpture in the British Museum, representing two boys who have quarrelled at this game. Attached to the village, which contains only a few houses, there is a *takiya* (resting-place or tomb) of a holy man named Mirza Abul-Câsem, who lived in the reign of Abbas the Great. The mausoleum resembles a caravansary, and is built round a square, containing a small garden and some chenârs; and at one end, is the tomb covered with a great slab of Yezd marble. The building is divided into numerous rooms; wherein any devoutly disposed persons are welcome to stay as long as their inclination prompts them to prayer

* Properly termed, I think, the talus or astragalus. It is the bone on the upper part of the foot, articulated to the leg. The Persians name it *kaab* or "ankle," as it really is.

and meditation, beside the resting-place of the departed worthy. Above the door at the entrance, is a *goolduateh* or pulpit for the muezzin who calls the faithful to prayers.

The *gooldusteh* is a common appendage to sacred edifices, and is always placed in the highest and most conspicuous situation. It resembles a pulpit, having a railing breast high; above which, supported on posts, is a little cupola covered with bright green or blue *káshee* tiles. In this box, the muezzin presents himself at the proper times of the day, and summons all true Moslems within the reach of his sonorous voice, to their devotions.

The burying-ground is a wide plain of hard dry gravelly soil, stocked with graves; those of the wealthy generally having over them a *takiya* or built sepulchre, while resting-places of others are marked by a low structure of bricks, covered with an inscribed slab, or where the deceased was very poor, with a simple accumulation of stones and bricks. The *takiya*, a name usually applied to the tomb of some one eminent for piety and other virtues, consists of an open room containing the grave, with a dome above. A little way from the village, stands the *takiya* of a holy lady, commonly called Mâderi Shahzâdeh (the Prince's mother), as Prince Mahommed Mirza (who built the Sar Poosheeda palace) greatly revered her, and was wont to call her his mother, though she was not, in reality, related to him.

In the centre of the building, is an octagonal structure of *mushebbek* or open work of bricks arranged in a pattern like lace; through which, one may see within, two tombs of fine greenish white marble, one of which is that of the lady, but who may be the tenant of the other, I could not find out. Beside this *takiya*, is another named after one Agha Hosein, a pious moollah who died in the year of the Hijra 1099 (A.D. 1687). This sepulchre contains many graves, besides that of the individual after whom it is named; and some of these are covered with beautifully sculptured inscriptions upon tablets of marble. Towards the northern side of the burying-ground, and not far from the bridge of Khâjoo, is the sepulchre of a famous derveesh and saint, named Baba Rookn; surmounted with a peaked dome like the extinguisher of a candle.

Upon many of the sculptured gravestones, I remarked the following quatrain, which I copied—

داراي زمين و آسمان ياور ماست
چشم همهٔ انبيا بر پيغمبر ماست
از گرمي آفتاب محشر غم نيست
تا سايهٔ مرتضي علي بر سر ماست

" The Lord of earth and sky is our Helper;
" The expectations of all the Prophets are fixed on the Messenger sent unto us (Mahommed).

"We need not fear the heat of the fierce sun of the Resurrection.
"While the protection of Murteza Alee overshadows our heads."

East of the Takhti Foolâd, extends a waste of broken undulating ground, entirely barren and stony, named the Hazâr Derra, or "Thousand vales;" a desolate plain of considerable extent. Upon a rising ground here, there formerly stood an ancient tower, known by the name of the Meeli Shâtir or "Footman's obelisk," mentioned by Morier and Frazer as the place whence the best view of the city might be had; but the tower has since been levelled by the unsparing hand of time.

In this city, as at Sheerauz, it very rarely happens that a house is destroyed by fire. Such a casualty seldom occurs in any Persian town; excepting some of those about the coast of the Caspian, where the houses are built chiefly of wood. Desolation and ruins there are however, enough to sicken the heart and weary the eye, without the aid of this calamity so common and destructive in more civilized cities. When I asked Cherâgh Alee Khan why repairs were not made in the city, and ruins cleared away, he frankly told me, and I have no doubt he spoke the truth, that the public coffers were empty and that no money could be got for the purpose. The country labours under a general dearth of capital and coin. No such thing as a bank is known in

Persia; nor have the people (except the merchants who trade with other countries) any idea of banking operations. When a man possesses money, he carefully conceals it, and would not willingly let his nearest kinsmen even know of its existence. The practice of burying money is common here as in India; and this practice constantly occasions the loss of large sums — for owing to the universal want of mutual confidence among the nearest relatives, it often happens that a person dies without revealing to any one the place of his hidden hoard.

The language of educated persons at Ispahan does not differ from the dialect of Sheerauz, except in a few peculiarities of pronunciation, which is rougher and harsher; and certain idioms, which the Sheerauzees (who pride themselves greatly on their purity of speech and accent) ridicule exceedingly. The patois of the lower orders and peasantry varies more strikingly. Illiterate Persians do not generally speak badly or ungrammatically — particularly the people of the towns — for notwithstanding the respect exacted as due to rank and office, the intercourse between all ranks and classes in this country is much more free and unreserved than with us. Nothing is more common than to hear a Persian noble converse with his servants and dependants as if they were his equals — but in this case, the great man must, of course, make the first advance towards familiarity. Villagers and peasantry being

more cut off from the rest of the world, have more peculiarities of dialect; and many of their common phrases are unintelligible to the townsmen.

The Persians are justly proud of their language; which, like French in Europe, has been adopted as the court speech and medium of correspondence, of a great portion of Asia. When Mahomedan power was paramount in India, Persian was universally employed; and (as Bernier and other old travellers have informed us) among the better class of Indian Moslems, it was considered a mark of vulgarity to speak in Hindee — Persian was the only proper language of a gentleman. It is still studied by every Indian Mahomedan who makes any pretension to polite education; but it is by no means as generally used in India, as formerly; and has been abolished in the courts of justice, in which it was once employed, to the exclusion of all the vernacular languages of the country.

Mr. Scott Waring has very justly observed — "It may be proper to notice the very great difference between the Persian spoken in India and in Persia. The pronunciation has frequently little or no resemblance: and the idiom varies so much as to subject an Indian to great inconvenience and frequent mistakes. A foreigner who speaks and pronounces English as it is written, could not make more egregious blunders." This is perfectly true, and it is not

difficult to account for it. In most countries, the language used in studied compositions and poetry differs widely from the ordinarily spoken dialect; and in Persian, as well as most other Asiatic tongues, the difference is far greater than with us; the language of composition being usually made as much unlike that of common conversation as possible: a style more easily managed by a Persian than an English writer; as from the great copiousness of his language, he often has a dozen or more words to express things, for which we have only one word in English.

Natives of India learn Persian, as we do Latin, entirely from books, most of which were written many centuries ago; and they have no skill or practice in the modern dialect. When I studied Persian in India, I was fortunate enough to obtain the services of a native of Persia as my teacher; and having always kept up my acquaintance with the language, I have now no difficulty in holding intercourse with any and every one. Persian lexicographers who have compiled dictionaries of their language, have inserted only such words as may be considered classical; and excluded all those which are not usually admitted into composition, but used only in familiar talk — hence, some hundreds of the commonest phrases, which one may hear every minute, will be quite unintelligible to an Indian, or to anyone who has acquired the language from books.

The Persian language was formerly employed

in the civil and criminal courts in India; and a sad jargon it was; only to be equalled by our Law Latin. Correspondence is still carried on in this language, among Indian Mussulmans; and strange specimens of epistolary style, their letters usually are. Indians admire a tirade of servile adulation, that even to a Persian would appear fulsome and ridiculous; and the purport of the letter is nearly obscured under a cumbrous load of compliment. This style formerly prevailed in all Persian correspondence, but it has now gone out of fashion in this country.*

The Shah, it is reported, will leave Tehrân in Spring, with all his court, and spend the summer months at Ispahan. In civilized lands, the visit of a monarch and his suite confers a benefit on a place — houses let well — trade thrives — the people sell their produce at a high rate: but here, such an arrival is regarded as a calamity: the bands of rapacious nobles, retinue, and soldiery

* I may observe that natives of India never fasten a letter with a wafer or other substance wetted in the mouth, and to offer a person a letter thus secured, is equivalent to an insult. In Persia, on the contrary, a letter is always fastened with the moisture of the tongue. A Persian letter is folded up close, like a thread-paper or match to light a candle; and in the middle is inserted a narrow strip of coloured adhesive paper, called the *ser-chasbân*, the end of which is brought round the folded paper, wetted with the tip of the tongue, and thus secured. The writer then smears the surface of his seal-ring with ink (which is thicker and blacker than ours) and stamps it on the place where the fastening is.

attending the Shah, are wont to seize upon everything and pay for nothing. Some of the inhabitants of Julfa are dismantling and unroofing the summer-houses in their gardens, to render the tenements uninhabitable, so that none of the suite of the court may take possession of them.

News has also arrived that a regiment of Armenian infantry is to be raised immediately; and the conscription will be made chiefly at Julfa, where these Christians are most numerous. In other Moslem countries, the Christian is exempt from enrolment for military service, being held unworthy to stand in the ranks along with the followers of the Arabian impostor; but here he enjoys no such immunity. The Shah is resolved on augmenting his army — whose pay he has not the means of disbursing — and compulsory recruitment is now going on among the scanty population of his dominions, already too few for the cultivation of the ground. The condition of the poor Armenian recruits will be an unenviable one: Mahomedan soldiers, destitute of pay and rations, can make shift to live by plundering the villagers; but I doubt whether the Mahomedan peasantry will submit to be pillaged by Christians; and though the government tacitly permits the first to exercise these unlawful means, when the treasury is low and no funds for the army to be had—the outcry against the second, with the whole moollah-hood to back the remonstrance, will be

too strong and universal, not to prevail against a like privilege being conceded to them. The tidings have caused great consternation among the Armenians, many of whom are secretly decamping from Julfa, for the Germseer; whence they hope to make their way to India or the Turkish dominions.

About a fortnight after my arrival in Julfa, the frost broke up; and at present*, although there is a slight frost every night and thin ice at sunrise, the midday sun is becoming warm. The thermometer now stands at 36° at six A.M., and 54° at noon in the shade; and I still burn a wood fire all day. Though most of the snow has disappeared from the face of the soil, it is still lying deep in many places, where it will require several hot sunny days to melt it. A week ago, on the 23rd of February, there was a shower of snow; and I am informed that it sometimes falls here as late as the end of the present month.

It being my intention to visit Tehrân before the hot weather sets in, I have made arrangements for starting as soon as possible after the festival of Now Rooz. I thought at first of travelling *chaparee*, as it is termed, namely, by post-horses; but not liking the appearance of the half-starved and jaded cattle, such as I have seen, I finally resolved on pursuing my journey as I had done hitherto.

* March 1st.

Travelling *chaparee* is by far the most expeditious mode of getting over the ground. The traveller should send off his baggage a fortnight before he starts himself, as he can carry very little with him; and then having obtained an order for post-horses from the Governor, he sets off accompanied by a courier, riding all day, and changing horses at each station; by which means he can travel sixty miles or more daily. The entire journey from Ispahan to Tehrân, about 240 miles, is commonly made out in four days. The post was originally instituted for the prompt conveyance of the Shah's commands, government despatches, &c.; and the courier can easily be induced to carry, at the same time, private letters for a small consideration. There are *chapar-khonehs* or post-stations established on the principal roads, and maintained by government, which allows 200 tomâns a year to each station, with a certain quantity of barley and straw, furnished by the nearest villages: and the *chaparchees* (post-holders) at every station are expected to have six or seven horses constantly in readiness. The salary is however badly paid. The *chaparchee-bâshee* or "postmaster-general" at Tehrân, through whose hands the entire sum passes, embezzles a great part of it; and the cattle are in a corresponding bad plight. *Chapar-khonehs* are upon the roads leading from Tehrân the capital, to Ispahan and Sheerauz southward, but no

further than Sheerauz in that direction — to Mush,hed eastward — to Tabreez westward — and to Hamadan and Kermanshah in a south-westerly direction. There are none on any other road.

CHAP. XXVII.

Festival of Now Rooz. — Departure for Tehrân. — Unlucky Day. — Astrology. — Village of Gaz. — Village of Sow. — Kohrood. — Kashan. — Sinsein. — Pasangoon.

On the morning of the 22nd of March, a roar of cannon from the Meidâni Shah in the city, announced the commencement of the *Eidi now rooz* or "feast of new year's day." This was the beginning of the solar year of the old fire-adoring Persians; and the festival, held in the vernal equinox (when the sun enters Aries, about the 21st of March) is still kept up, although the people have changed their calendar along with their religion.* All other feasts and holidays are regulated by lunar time, like our Easter. The solar festival of *now rooz* is celebrated for three days or longer; and is the chief season for merry-making in the year. The Shah receives presents from all his subordinates, governors of provinces and others; and sends *khelâts* or dresses of honour to every person of note. Shops are orna-

* At a future opportunity, I shall give some account of Persian reckoning of time.

mented; and every one dresses himself in new clothes. A universal holiday prevails; and everybody shakes hands with everybody else, as they happen to meet; congratulating each other with "May your festival be blessed!"

The orders, I mentioned before, have been issued from the capital, to raise a certain amount of troops, from among the Armenians. For this purpose, a *yáver* or major with two subalterns and twenty privates have been quartered in Julfa; and every day a number of able-bodied men have been seized and pressed into service. Impressment is necessary in this case, as no Armenian would voluntarily enlist. The *yáver* is himself an Armenian, but a man of infamous repute; and one who apparently takes a particular pleasure in maltreating and harassing his own fraternity, whom he treats with greater severity, than any Mahomedan officer would probably use. At the time I left Julfa, the male inhabitants were running away and concealing themselves in the neighbouring villages, or endeavouring to make their way to the south; while the recruiting party was misusing the king's press in the true Falstaff fashion. Persons were seized indiscriminately, and given to understand that they might buy their liberty; and it was whispered that the deputy-governor had no more scruples than his delegates, and would let any pressed man go free for a consideration of five or six tomâns.

Young children were laid hold of in the streets, and money extorted from their parents, as the price of their release; and the *yâver* once threatened to impress the priests! The Armenians have addressed petitions to the Shah and prime minister; but with what hopes of success, it would be difficult to conjecture. Not the least disgusting part of the business, was to see the Armenian people, instead of making any common cause against their oppressors, all endeavouring to betray one another; eagerly giving information in what houses able young men were to be found, and disclosing the hiding-places of fugitives. Among this people, the place of Christian brotherly love and unity has been supplied by rancour, malice and discord.

A newspaper has lately been set up at Tehrân — the only thing of the kind that has appeared in Persia for some years past—and before leaving Ispahan, I received some numbers of it. It is established under royal patronage; and all the Shah's officers throughout the country are given to understand that they are expected to subscribe to it. The issue is weekly: it is done in lithograph; and superintended by an Englishman. The contents are chiefly extracts from English and French papers, scraps of Persian news, appointments of officials, &c., and sometimes a little of the marvellous, without which it would fail to please the taste of Persians. The European extracts are mostly accounts of accidents, fires, ship-

wrecks, robberies and murders; fully calculated to convey to the Persian mind, the idea that life among the Feringees must be one continued scene of peril and disaster.

A press established with the permission and under the patronage of the Shah, is of course not a free one; and taking into consideration the constitution of Persian society and government, it is better that it should continue under censorship. Much has been said about the advantages, and the reverse, of a free press in India; and in spite of popular opinion, I greatly doubt the wisdom and propriety of the step, for which Sir Charles Metcalfe has been so highly lauded.

Liberty was given to the Indian press in 1835, during Metcalfe's short governorship; but the result of this measure has only been to render it licentious and libellous, without in any way producing the smallest beneficial effect, either on the natives or their rulers. Among a free people governed by their own countrymen, as in England, the press cannot be too free; but in India, where the dominion is that of foreigners, and where the people have no idea of any but an absolute government, a free press must be dangerous and pernicious. The people are quite unfit to appreciate or make good use of the liberty of the press; and as mischief, scurrility, and blackguardism, are always more captivating and profitable than truth and decency, there can be little question as to which style, most editors

of papers will prefer adopting. With a few exceptions, our Indian newspapers are of a very inferior stamp.

The Bâbees have lately been defeated by the Shah's troops at Zenjân, and that town has been taken and dismantled. The small band of the Bâbees who garrisoned it, behaved with great determination and bravery; and for several months held out against six regiments of the royal army, till they were starved into a surrender. After the town had yielded, the troops, according to Persian custom, proceeded to wreak a savage vengeance on the conquered, as punishment for their brave and obstinate resistance. The whole Bâbee population was brought out into the plain outside of the town, and there they were all, men, women, children, and infants, deliberately bayonetted to death. The soldiery also dug up the bodies of some who had fallen in the course of the siege, and hacked them in pieces; rejoicing in all manner of savage barbarities, such as only the veriest brutes and cowards could commit. The persecution of the Bâbees is still carried on; but tempered with mercy. Every one of this sect, when arrested, is invited to recant and return within the pale of Islâm: if he complies, he is at once freely pardoned, but in case of his refusal, he is forthwith decapitated.

Soon after the conclusion of the Now Rooz festivities, I quitted Ispahan for the capital, travelling as formerly, on my own horse, with six hired

mules for servants and baggage. Journies are made at night after Now Rooz; for although the nights are still cold, the weather is getting hot during the day.

The sudden approach and rapid advance of the spring, are very striking. Before the snow is well off the ground, the trees burst into blossom, and flowers start forth from the soil. At Now Rooz, the snow was lying in patches on the hills and in the shaded vallies, while the fruit-trees in the gardens were budding beautifully, and green plants and flowers springing up on the plains on every side—

> "And on old Hyems' chin and icy crown
> An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
> Is, as in mock'ry, set."

The quantity of apricots produced at Ispahan, to judge by the number of trees and the profusion of blossom with which they are covered, must be prodigious. Among the plants newly appeared, I recognised some old acquaintances, which I had not seen for many a year: among these, were two varieties of the thistle — a coarse species of daisy like the "horse-gowan" — red and white clover — the dock — the blue corn-flower — and that vulgar herb the dandelion, rearing its yellow crest on the banks of the watercourses. The stately *chenârs* were putting on their spring attire of large buds, rapidly expanding into broad green foliage, contrasting beautifully with the silvery white bark of the tall erect tree. Birds were

making their appearance to enliven the gardens. The nightingale had not yet arrived, for Philomel does not make her note heard, until the roses blow. The *sâr*, a blackbird much like ours in England, appeared in numbers; as well as the *dirakht-ken*, a pretty species of woodpecker.

The day on which we were to commence the journey, proved to be, for some reason or other, *nahs* or "unlucky;" so the start was put off till the next; while the *chârvadâr* went in quest of a star-gazer in the neighbourhood, to whom people resort on such occasions, and who, like the "cunning man hight Sidrophel" —

> "——Deals in destiny's dark counsels
> And sage opinions of the moon sells."

These lucky and unlucky times are as vexatious as they are absurd, but the Persians, one and all, believe in them implicitly, and it is utterly useless to argue the matter. The Shah will not leave his capital; the general will not lead his army; the humble individual will not commence a journey, or even put on a suit of new clothes, without first ascertaining a lucky day.* An

* One very common mode of divination in this country is called the *ilmi-shoona* or "science of the shoulder blade," and practised by cutting out the bladebone of a sheep newly killed and examining the lines and marks upon it. This was common in England in old times, and in Scotland within a century past. Pennant mentions it in the latter country, where it was termed "reading the spaul-bane," and gives an account of a Highlander in the Isle of Skye foretelling the event of the battle of Culloden by this means.

almanac in MS. which I got on Now Rooz day, has all these times and seasons, fortunate and unfortunate, detailed at length. This ephemeris is very like some which were current in England, at no distant date. I have seen an almanac, printed in London not a century ago, which afforded such sensible and useful hints as — on such a day — " go not near princes and rulers — converse not with old men — beware of strife " — and on such another day — " expect good counsel — proceed to matrimony — begin thy project, for it shall be successful " — with sage advice on minor points, such as — on such an hour, put on new garments — write to thy friends — comb thy hair, &c. — fully showing, that folly, ignorance and superstition, are not confined to any quarter of the world in particular.

Prying into futurity by means of divination, is certainly forbidden by Mahomedan religious law; but it is nevertheless universally practised. Astrology is also in full force; and so mixed up with astronomy, that the latter may be said to be merged in the former. Ulugh Beg, the grandson of Teimour Lung, was one of the greatest of astronomers and astrologers that have appeared in the East, since the days of Abu-Muâsher.* The astronomical tables he compiled, have met with the approbation of our learned men of the

* Abu-Muâsher, whom we have called Albumazar, flourished in the ninth century. The name signifies "Father of conversation."

West, for their ingenuity and accuracy; though they are, of course, based on the false principles of Ptolemy, upheld by all good Moslems. I got a copy of these curious Tables at Sheerauz, but I cannot say that I understand much about them. On one occasion Ulugh Beg fancied that he read in the stars, that he was fated to be deposed and murdered by his own son Abdul-Lateef. Whether the young gentleman's want of filial piety had given his sire good reason to suspect the probability of such an attempt being made, is uncertain; but the princely astronomer resolved to thwart the fates, if possible, by imprisoning his son for life. Abdul-Lateef, however, contrived to escape; and some years after, actually verified the evil omen by deposing his father, and putting him to death — A. D. 1449.

Notwithstanding the universal faith in astrology among Moslems of every country, some of their sages have written against it. The famous Ibn Rushd (whom we, by some extraordinary perversion of nomenclature, have called Averrhoes) condemned astrology without reserve, and declared the whole science to be fallacious and absurd.*

* Mahommed Ibn Rushd, the philosopher and physician, was born at Cordova, and died in A. D. 1198. He first translated Aristotle from Greek into Arabic. A despiser of astrology and sundry other superstitions, he was not less severe upon Christianity, (such as he saw it in Spain) which he has pronounced to be the most ridiculous form of idolatry — as these Christians every day manufacture their god afresh, in the

Taking an omen from the Koran is a common method of ascertaining the expediency or otherwise of any projected undertaking. I have formerly made mention of the way of deriving a lot from Hâfiz; but to consult the Koran for this purpose, is a more solemn and formal piece of ceremony. This is usually done with the aid of a *fâl nameh*, or "omen-book," as it is called, which is nothing more than an augurial description of the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet, some of which are lucky at various times, and others the reverse. The lot-seeker, in the first place, performs the *vuzoo* or proper ablutions, and repeats the *fâtiha* or first chapter of the holy book, commonly called the *soorat-ul-hamd* (chapter of praise); as well as one of the latter chapters, termed the *soorat-ul-ikhlâs* (chapter of sincerity): he next opens the Koran with closed eyes, turns over seven leaves to the left hand, and looking on the right hand page of the open volume, counts seven lines from the top. In the first letter of the seventh line his lot will

shape of a wheat-flour biscuit, and then eat him up! No one who has witnessed a Popish mass can deny the truth of the allegation. The Aristotle of Ibn Rushd was translated from the Arabic into Latin by the celebrated Michael Scott, (for Greek was unknown in these days to the Christians of western Europe) who was cotemporary with the Spanish-Arab philosopher; and who, being somewhat more wise and learned than his ignorant countrymen, was, as a matter of course, dubbed a wizard and necromancer; in which character, his name is still best remembered.

be found; and to discover its tendency, he refers to the *fâl-nameh.* There are other ways of seeking the Koranic omen, which it would be tedious to describe. The practice, silly as it is, bears the stamp of high authority; I have a favourite *fâl-nameh* which was composed by no less a personage than the Imaum Jaafer Sâdek.

We quitted Ispahan by the northern gate of the city, named the *dervâza,e toopchee* or "gunner's gate," which has two old-fashioned stone lions on either side of the portal, and beyond it a ruin of a large building called the Koush-khoneh, or "Falcon-house;" and then entered a wide level plain, partly cultivated, but chiefly desert, and teeming with saltpetre, which forms a white efflorescence on the surface of the sterile ground. Turning to the westward, in two hours we reached Gaz, our *nakli-makoon* or first short stage *, where we were to pass the night. Gaz is a large walled village, three farsakhs or eleven miles distant from Ispahan; and the caravansary, a large and tolerably good one, is about a mile further on. Near the caravansary lay two or three fields covered with a small plant having a yellow flower, called *tâjreezee* or *sug-angoor* (dog's grapes) — what it is I do not know: the flowers, I was told, are succeeded by clusters of berries, the seeds of which are much used in medicine.

* The term *nakli-makoon* signifies "change of place," and the first day's march, which is usually a very short one, to collect the caravan together, is so called.

The plain about here, is watered by *kanâts*, or subterraneous channels. This mode of conveying water is common in all parts of Persia; and as I have not (that I can remember) previously described it, I shall now venture on some explanation. It has been truly remarked that water in this country is not silver, but gold! The whole of Persia — with the exception of some places, few and far between — is miserably ill-watered; and the hard burnt soil generally requires nothing but irrigation to render it green and fertile: the most barren ground, when moistened with a plentiful supply of the precious element, becomes productive and fruitful with a rapidity almost miraculous. In Britain, we dig subterraneous canals, for the purpose of carrying off as much water as possible from the land — here they undermine the ground, with the very opposite object in view. In India, the effect of irrigation is the same as here, but water is more easily obtained *: rivers and streams are numerous; while in Persia, streams are few, and rivers there are, properly speaking, none.

The description of watercourse here alluded to, denominated *kanât* or *kâreez*, is an artificial channel, by which water is conveyed under-

* A late governor of Madras, a distinguished agriculturist in his own country, is said to have asked, on his arrival in India, what steps the people generally took to *drain* the rice-fields! Rice requires more water than any other grain: a good rice-field is, in fact, a shallow lake.

ground from a remote spring, perhaps miles distant, to the plain or fields to be irrigated; where it issues upon the surface, and the water is distributed in streams above ground, leading in all directions required. To form one of these watercourses, the peasants search for a spring; and when they find a likely spot, they sink a well, three or four feet in diameter, and deep enough to reach the water. They then dig a number of these wells, varying from twenty to fifty yards apart, in the direction whither the water is to be conveyed; and connect them all together by a subterraneous passage leading from well to well; through which the body of water flows. In places where the ground is soft, the wells and passage are sometimes bricked. In this way the water is gradually brought to the surface of a plain, from a spring which may be distant only a few hundred yards, or it may be several miles.

When the *kanát* is completed, the wells are of no particular use, except to let a man descend occasionally to clear out the channel, should it become obstructed. The great advantage in having the water thus conveyed underground is that it is not evaporated and wasted by the heat of the sun. I have heard that when any peasant brings waste ground into cultivation by irrigating it at his own expense, it becomes his property without purchase. It is a singular fact that many *kanáts* are full of fish; and as these water-

courses are brought from springs underground, and are not connected with any other body of water, it is not easy to conjecture how the fish come to be there; I have, however, seen some, like good-sized perch, and weighing nearly a pound, taken out of them. *Kanâts*, marked by the long line of well-mouths, may be seen in most of the plains and vallies in the country, but great numbers of them are now useless, dry and choaked up; bearing evidence of former prosperity and present neglect and ruin.

I reached Gaz about noon, and there we remained all day. After a short ramble, I returned to the caravansary, and endeavoured to wile away the time with Mrs. Radcliffe's "Mysteries of Udolpho," which I happened to pick up in Julfa, where it had been left by some visitor of former years; but the old charm of a favourite of my childhood was entirely gone, and I could only wonder how I had ever been fascinated with such sad stuff. These bygone tastes are mournful reflections: such subjects—

> "Raise only now a melancholy wish
> I were the little trifler once again
> Who could be pleased so lightly!"

I accordingly consigned "Udolpho" to the hands of my cook, that its mysteries, no longer capable of charming, might be applied to the useful purposes of lighting fires and singeing fowls —and took up instead, the renowned "Hajji

Baba," which on my journey to the capital, I have read through, for the third time since my arrival in this country. The more I see of Persian manners and morals, the more I am impressed with the great fidelity and exquisite humour of Morier's admirable story.

At midnight we quitted Gaz for Moorchakhoor, six farsakhs off. The night was so dark that nothing was to be seen on the road, which fortunately is easy and level. Half-way, we passed a ruined caravansary, said to be a common resort of thieves; and one farsakh from Moorchakhoor, there is another large caravansary with a village round it, now all in ruins, named Mâderi Abbas, and which was built by the mother of Abbas the Great. The Bakhtiyâree robbers were wont to infest this part of the country; but now the road seems to be clear of them.*

Moorchakhoor is a walled village of no great size, said to contain about 250 houses; and at a little distance is the caravansary; a tolerably good one, built by a vazeer of Fat,h Alee Shah, in the early part of that monarch's reign. The water here is brackish and bad, as the ground is full of salt. The plain beside the village is the scene of a famous battle, fought between the Persians headed by Nadir Koollee (afterwards Nadir

* The Bakhtiyârees are a large tribe, principally inhabiting the mountains of Looristan, to the west of Irauk, but often wandering in all parts of the country. They have, on several occasions, attacked the city of Ispahan.

Shah) and the Affghans under Meer Ashraff; in which the latter were totally defeated. This engagement took place on the 13th of November, 1729.

My endeavours to sleep during the day were not very successful; owing firstly to the visit of a party of musicians who made noise enough to put Somnus to flight beyond hope of recall; and next to a band of marksmen outside, who fired at a target for nearly two hours. In the evening, I got a few hours' sleep before starting. The musical party had several small drums, called *toombek*, played on with the hand; and a bagpipe without a drone, termed *nei-amboona*, less in size and less noisy than our Scottish instrument: two of them moreover sang or squalled most vilely. The harp is now no longer to be seen in Persia; though it was once common: it is often mentioned in the works of their poets, and represented in old illustrated manuscripts.

In the afternoon there was a thunderstorm, followed by rain. Thunder and lightning are of rare occurrence in Persia; and the extreme dryness of the climate is said to be the cause of this. I know not whether the same cause will account for the frequency and brilliancy of nightly meteors; but I think I never elsewhere beheld falling stars so many or so luminous, as in this country. Along with the shower, appeared a beautiful rainbow. The common people believe the rainbow to be the reflection of Mount Kâf (the chain of

mountains which is supposed to surround the flat plain of the world) and its colours, they think, shadow forth coming events—if red predominates, war will ensue—if green, fertility—if yellow, sickness.

Two hours after midnight, we resumed the journey. Our caravan consisted of six horsemen, seven persons riding mules, and ten baggage mules; inclusive of myself, servants and cattle. Five of the baggage mules were laden with tea and Indian chintz, belonging to two merchants in company. One of my travelling companions was a *shahzâdeh* or personage of royal blood, named Jehângeer Mirza, one of the very numerous grandchildren of Fat,h Alee Shah; who was on his way to Tehrân, to visit the Shah on business connected with certain *tuyool* lands which he held near Ispahan. He was a good-humoured, odd sort of man, past middle age, exceedingly ignorant and illiterate, and though very deaf, perpetually talking and asking questions. He thought that the English, French and Russians (the only Europeans he had heard of) were all under one king; and seemed surprized when I told him that they were three distinct nations; and that the present sovereign of Britain was a female. But this latter piece of information, I suspect, he did not fully credit.

He was equally ignorant, or nearly so, of the history of his own country: I doubt whether any one of our muleteers could have been more com-

pletely innocent of all instruction and information. He made no secret of a pretty evident attachment to the juice of the grape, which he declared to be absolutely requisite for the preservation of his health; and was disappointed to find that I had with me no European wine, which he preferred to Persian, as being stronger, and consequently more salutary. He was accompanied by two men-servants, whom he treated more like equals than domestics, and an Abyssinian slave-girl, to whom he behaved with less respect, addressing her, ever and anon, by the endearing epithet of *pider-sookhta* (child of a burnt father): her chief occupation seemed to be making tea for him, and fanning him to sleep, when we rested in the caravansaries. One of the men-servants carried his pipe, which he smoked almost incessantly.

The Persians commonly smoke while riding along. The pipe, with all its apparatus, is carried by a servant, who bears, fixed in front of his saddle (where the pistol holsters would otherwise be) two oblong cases, like a pair of drums, made of wood and leather; in one of which is stowed the principal portion of the pipe, the chrystal vase with its upright stalk of carved wood; and in the other, the long snake-tube coiled up, the silver head and cover, and a provision of tobacco ready pounded and moistened. From the forepart of the saddle hang iron chains, sustaining on one side a small iron chafing-dish, filled with

burning charcoal, which hangs below the rider's stirrup, but a little way above the ground; counterbalanced on the opposite flank by a metal *aftába* full of water. With these aids, the kaleon is got ready with ease, whenever called for; and the servant hands his master the end of the snake, through which he smokes, while the pipe bearer rides a little in the rear. Every Persian who can afford it, has his pipe thus carried after him wherever he goes. In travelling, it forms a part of his baggage, as indispensable as his wardrobe and his bed.* Instead of a glass, or cut chrystal bottle, the travelling kaleon often has a vase of hard stiff leather, mounted with silver, which is less liable to break.

Our other fellow-travellers were two merchants or shopkeepers on their way to Tabreez; both of whom were armed to the teeth, like two bandit chieftains, with guns, pistols, swords and daggers; as is the common practice of wayfarers in Persia. The Shahzâdeh and I were more peaceable in appearance, for I carried no arms but my fowlingpiece, and he wore in his girdle a *khanjer* and an antiquated brace of long Turkish pistols.

* A Persian bed consists of two quilts and a pillow. The lower quilt, which is the largest, is doubled, and serves for a mattress. The upper is single, and covers the sleeper. These quilts are of chintz, padded thickly with cotton. The whole is rolled up and stowed into a *maffrash* or carpet covering. I have always used a Mackintosh air-bed, which is more portable, and being, besides, impervious to wet, may, without danger, be spread on damp ground.

As for our heavily-armed associates, I doubt much whether either of them would have attempted to use his weapons, had occasion required it. One frankly confessed to me that he had never fired a gun in his life, though he had always carried one on a journey. The way in which travellers in this country load themselves with weapons, says little in favour of the state of security of the Shah's roads, or the honesty of his subjects; but all this panoply is as frequently worn for show as for use.

Before sunrise, we passed a large *aub-ambár* (reservoir) on the roadside, constructed by some one as an act of religious merit. The public spirit, or private zeal, which prompted such works, appears to be dying out: Persians have less money and less religious feeling, than formerly, when all kinds of accommodations for travellers and pilgrims were built, as entailing a sure reward hereafter, or, as Lord Byron decently termed it — "buying a shilling's worth of salvation!"

Two hours after sunrise, we reached Deh Loor, a favourite *yeilauk* or summer residence, where people come, pitch tents, and live during the hot months. The ground here is very high, and our road had been gradually ascending for more than a farsakh. In the neighbourhood, there are one or two villages; but upon the uplands there was not a single house. The air here was sharp and cold, though there was not a breath of wind. Beyond this, we passed several gardens, in which

the trees had not yet budded; and at length reached Sow, distant seven farsakhs from the last stage.

Sow is divided into the higher and lower villages, both situated on little knolls within a few hundred yards of each other, and walled round. The caravansary stands apart, equidistant from both. It is small, and in better repair than usual, having been built not more than forty years ago, by one Abul-Câsem of Ispahan. On the skirt of a hill near, I observed several subterraneous excavations, with doors fitted to them, which, I was informed, were used for wintering sheep when snow is on the ground. I met here with Mahommed Hosein Khan, envoy from the Shah, on his way to Bushire, whence he is to sail for Bombay, where he has been appointed *balioos* (consular agent) for the Persian government. He had visited Europe along with the Shah's ambassador to Louis Philippe, some years ago; and had resided for more than a year in Paris.

We left at sunrise next day, on our way to Kohrood, six farsakhs distant. After an hour's ride, we got upon a rough road leading over hilly ground: it was bitterly cold, and we soon encountered a heavy fall of snow, which lasted nearly an hour. When the sky had cleared up, we ascended a hill where the snow had evidently not melted since Christmas, and was lying deep on both sides of the track. There is more wintry weather in this part of the world than I had sup-

posed: I little expected to see snow fall in the month of April.

After passing the hills, I saw some birds resembling grouse; and dismounting, I took my gun and killed a brace of them. They much resembled the *burr-teetur* or rock-grouse of India, and possessed all the characteristics of the grouse—the short arched bill, the red skin covering the eye, the feathered legs, and roughened toes. The colour of the plumage on the wings and back was brown with black points, and nearly all the rest of the body was black. This bird is larger than the Indian *burr-teetur*, but not quite as large as our Scottish grouse. It is called *bágri-kara*, a Turkish term signifying "black-breasted," and goes in pairs in the early part of the year, and afterwards in coveys.

Kohrood is a large village, built on the slope of a mountain, and overlooking a fine valley abounding in gardens and fields. Several streams of clear water meander through the valley; the green verdure of which was a pleasing relief to the eye, after the perpetual arid drab-coloured plains, which continually fatigue the sight of the traveller in Persia. The wheat-fields are arranged in terraces, with little embankments round the borders, to confine the water, and convey it, at proper intervals, from one ledge to another. Kohrood is considered a beautiful spot; as indeed it is, in comparison with other parts of this kingdom; but the beauty of the scene is far from

complete: the valley rejoices in verdure, trees and cultivation; but the surrounding mountains are bleak, bare and hideous. The situation is unquestionably fine, the climate healthy, and the heat of summer never excessive. The people are said to be a blackguardly turbulent crew; but of such conduct I witnessed no sample. A large caravansary, erected by Abbas the Second, lies in ruins: it was overthrown, a few years ago, by an earthquake, a visitation by no means uncommon in these parts; and seven persons were killed; while many more, lodging there at the time, with difficulty saved their lives by escaping from the tottering edifice before it fell in. The accident happened at night. The present accommodations for travellers, are two or three small dirty places, constructed for the purpose by the village people, who demand a fee from everyone taking up his quarters therein. There are some fine old walnut trees in the valley; and on the skirts of the hills, I saw the *gavan* or tragacanth plant *, and the *tengiz*, a kind of hawthorn, covered with beautiful pink blossoms.

In the afternoon, a wandering minstrel visited the place where the Shahzâdeh and I lodged, and insisted on entertaining us. He was a native of Marand in Azerbaijan, and was now on his way to Sheerauz. He carried a rude kind of guitar, the notes of which were not unpleasing, and his

* The gum which this plant yields, called *kateera*, is used for a great variety of purposes.

voice was remarkably good, but he often spoiled the effect by squalling in falsetto. He sang several of the lays of the famous bandit-minstrel Kurroglou; but as these songs are in the Toorkee language *, I could not understand them. Kurroglou was a real individual, who lived in the north-west of this country, during the reigns of Suffee and Abbas the Second. He was chief of a formidable horde of seven hundred and seventy-seven banditti; and united in his own person, the somewhat opposite characters of robber and troubadour; being not less famous for his skill in improvisatory minstrelsy, than for his adventurous exploits, courage, and giant strength.

He has now become a character of romance — his songs, like the lays of Ossian, have been preserved and handed down to posterity by minstrels; and all manner of superhuman achievements, ascribed to him, form the theme of many a rhapsody.† Popular ballads demonstrate the character of the people who own them. "Give me the making of a nation's songs," said worthy

* The Toorkee, which is in use all over the north-west of Persia, differs considerably from the Turkish of Constantinople; though both dialects were originally the same language. The Toorkee is in its ruder and simpler form, whereas the Turkish has been much refined and mixed with other tongues.

† The songs and fabulous adventures of Kurroglou have been collected together and translated into English by Mr. Chodzko, formerly attached to the suite of the Russian minister at Tehràn. This version has been published by the Oriental Translation Fund Society in London.

Fletcher of Saltoun, "and let him who likes make its laws!" This was true then, and the remark will be equally just in all lands, where the people read little and write less. How well do our old British ballads evince the manly character of the Anglo-Saxon, Norman and Celt! The songs of Oriental nations (I do not include the studied and refined compositions of regular poets) are of a different stamp, and characterize a people of a different disposition. Silliness, sensuality and brutality are their chief features — I would not give Chevy Chace and the Nutbrowne Mayde for a camel's load of them. There is not a spark of honour or chivalry in the hero of an Eastern romaunt — he is either a piece of superhuman extravagance; or, if resembling ordinary mortal men, a treacherous, sensual ruffian. How different from bold Robin Hood, and the manly, warm-hearted, fair-play-loving heroes of our English ballads!

In the evening, I saw a number of mules and donkies pass by, loaded with great heaps of old rags of carpets, *nummuds* and woollen stuffs; which the driver told me he was conveying to Ispahan, as manure for the rice-plantations at Linjân. It seems that previous to flooding the fields with water, they collect vast quantities of woollen rags, and having torn them up into the smallest shreds, spread them on the field to mix with the soil; and this, it is said, makes excellent manure. I do not know whether this

description of fertilizing matter is used in any part of India; I certainly never heard of it before. One man had a donkey laden with cherry-sticks from the mountains of Looristan, which he was taking to the capital. Great numbers of these are exported to Baghdad and the Turkish dominions, where they are bored for pipe-stems. Here they are sometimes made into walking-sticks; for pipes of this description are not used by the Persians.

Early next morning, we proceeded along a narrow valley, and at the distance of one farsakh from the village, reached the *bund* (embankment) of Kohrood, an artificial lake, made in the same manner as tanks commonly are in India, by a strong dyke or bank of stonework, which intercepts and collects the waters of the several mountain streams and melted snows; forming a huge reservoir, whence the water is let off to irrigate the distant low plains of Kashan. This *bund* was first erected by Abbas the Great, but has since been rebuilt at various times. The path led along the skirt of a rock on one side of the small lake, which I regret the imperfect light prevented my seeing to greater advantage, as this is said to be a delightful spot: the ShahzÂdeh called it *bihisht* (Paradise); but water and trees are such rarities in this kingdom, that any place where these are to be found in abundance, is Paradise to a Persian.

The narrow valley continues two farsakhs

further; and at its termination, a rüined caravansary stands on a height, named Gabrâbâd, as there formerly existed here a village inhabited by *Gabrs* (Guebres or fire-worshippers). From hence, the road is a rapid descent into an extensive plain, in the middle of which is the town of Kashan. This town, though four farsakhs distant from Gabrâbâd, did not appear more than one, so clear was the dry atmosphere. As we descended, the change of temperature was very perceptible: on the heights of Kohrood, my feet and hands were numb with cold; while on the plain of Kashan, the air was hot and suffocating. This plain is intersected by *kanâts* and streams; and near the city, and in a few other places, there is green verdure; but all the rest of the expanse wears the perpetual dreary russet hue, and the mountains flanking it are perfectly bare. The trees and crops were much further advanced than at Ispahan, denoting a warmer climate: the chenârs and poplars were in full leaf, and the wheat and barley nearly full grown.

Kashan is an irregularly built town, surrounded with mean-looking mud walls. In size and population it is nearly, if not quite, equal to Sheerauz. It has eight gates, but none handsomely constructed, or otherwise than in keeping with the ugly crumbling wall, through which they give entrance; and round the town lie heaps of unsightly ruins.

Kashan was founded by Zobeida, the favourite

wife of the khaleefa Haroon-ur-Rasheed, a lady whose name must be familiar to the civilized world, through the medium of the charming tales of the Thousand and one Nights. It is a great place of trade and manufactures, particularly of copper ware and silk stuffs; and the inhabitants are industrious and well-behaved, but notorious for cowardice. It is a common saying that it would take a hundred Kashanees to make one soldier. On the outskirts of the town, near the gate by which we entered, I saw two huge pyramids of mud, which, I was informed, were ice-depôts. A labyrinth of winding intricate lanes, full of pitfalls in the shape of dry wells, holes and chasms, conducted us into the heart of the town; and I took up my quarters in a large caravansary, where I preferred lodging in the *balakhoneh*, as the heat in the rooms below was stifling. Here I determined to halt during the following day, in order to see the place; and thus I lost the company of the Shahzâdeh, who was in a hurry to kiss the footstool of his royal relative, and pushed on next morning. I cannot say I much regretted his departure, for he was a somewhat tiresome companion at best.

Next morning, I went to visit the garden and palace of Feenn, nearly a farsakh distant from the town; and near the foot of a range of hills. This was a favourite resort of Fat,h Alee Shah; and whenever the king or any great personage visits Kashan, here he resides. The place is laid

out very similar to the Baghi Now, at Sheerauz; and contains three imârets or pavilions, with reservoirs of pellucid water, full of small fish, supplied, I believe, by an aqueduct from the neighbouring hill; while four *shurshuraks* or stone channels, constructed in inclined planes, with little cascades at every reservoir, conduct a stream towards all four points of the compass. The imarets have their principal rooms open to the weather; the waters flow through the lower halls; and the upper stories are built in light fanciful forms, such as we see in a Chinese painting. In one room I saw portraits of Fat,h Alee Shah and many of his sons. The garden is planted with rows of cypress and other trees, with beds of flowering shrubs. The residence is princely and beautiful; but, like almost everything in Persia, going to decay for want of proper care. Close to Feenn there is a small village, the lands of which are well cultivated, there being abundance of water. I observed great numbers of mulberry trees, planted for the purpose of rearing silkworms. The plots of wheat and barley were bordered with rows of the *bâkila*, a kidney-bean bearing a pretty flower like the garden lupine. Silk is produced here, but in no great quantity: most of that article used in the factories of the town, is brought in the raw state from Mazanderan and Geelan.

The bazârs of Kashan are numerous and large, but by no means neat or showy. Most of them

are very long, narrow, dirty and noisy; and the incessant clang of the coppersmiths' hammers is absolutely deafening. More copper utensils are made here than in any other city in Persia. Carpets, shawls, and silk cloth of all kinds are manufactured; as well as the ordinary cotton stuffs, *kadak* and *kerbâs*, and the *germasoof*, a mixture of silk and cotton, woven with a warp of the former and woof of the latter. Silk garments are forbidden to Moslems, and though many wear them without much scruple, they usually take off any article of silk attire when they repeat their prayers; this substance being considered *bee-namâz* (prayerless), that is to say, unclean and unfit to be worn at time of devotions.* The *germasoof*, not being pure silk, is not open to this objection, and may be prayed in; but the distinction is, after all, a mere subterfuge. The glazed tiles of various colours, used in ornamenting houses and other buildings, are also made here in great quantities. The bread of Kashan is particularly good, and I got here the best butter I have seen in this country.

I had not much time to inspect the town; but in reality there is little to be seen, for Kashan contains no fine buildings. The mosques are not remarkable for architectural elegance, nor are

* A Moslem, when about to pray, should lay aside his arms if he wears any, and whatever valuable articles, such as a watch, &c., he may happen to have. Strict religionists will not pray in a room where there are pictures.

there any other edifices worth looking at. There are several large caravansaries in the town, and one outside, near the southern gate.

The heat of this place, in summer, is excessive; and at that season, great numbers of large and venomous scorpions make their appearance. Kashan has always been notorious for these reptiles. They say that in Abbas the Great's time, several exorcists were deputed to deliver the town from the plague of scorpions; but their efforts, it would appear, did not prove as successful as those of St. Patrick.

Earthquakes are very frequent here, as indeed they seem to be in most parts of Persia.

After sunset, I quitted Kashan on my way to Sinsein, six or seven farsakhs distant. The route was quite devoid of interest, traversing a succession of barren plains. About three farsakhs from Kashan, we passed Nasserâbâd, a village where the muleteers stopped for a minute to light their kaleons. The night was warm and still, with not a breath of air stirring; and I found it oppressively close, after the cold weather to which I had of late been accustomed. We reached Sinsein after midnight. This is a large caravansary standing alone, with no village or house nearer than a mile at least. It was built by Fat,h Alee Shah, and though constructed without the least pretensions to elegance, is well built and substantial.

Near it, may be seen the remains of what must

have been a very large village; and the level plain around, exhibits long lines of *kanáts*, now ruined and choaked up with rubbish.

At sunset we resumed our journey. One farsakh from Sinsein we passed a ruined village, named Dihnaur, upon a rising ground; and about two farsakhs further on, another ruined village called Shooraub; where there is a caravansary, partly habitable. About midnight we reached Pasangoon, our halting-place, six farsakhs from Sinsein.

Pasangoon is also a solitary caravansary, standing alone in a desert plain. No place being near, where supplies can be had, the traveller who has not provision of his own, will fare badly. Beside the caravansary, there are two *aub-ambárs* in which a sufficiency of water is collected in winter, to last during the summer: each is covered with a dome, giving it the appearance of a small mosque. Just as I arrived, I met a large party of *zuvárs* (pilgrims)* coming from the holy mausoleum of Koom, with a long string of camels and mules, many of which bore pairs of female pilgrims ensconced in closely covered *kajávehs*. Some of the males in the cavalcade were singing with all their might, and had evidently been paying their devotions to Bacchus, after their prayers at the sacred shrine.

* A *zurár* is a visitor to one of the minor places of pilgrimage, such as the tombs of saints at Kerbela, Mush,hed, Koom, &c., in contradistinction to a *hájee* or pilgrim to Mecca.

Next morning, after breakfasting, we proceeded to Koom, four farsakhs distant. Before we had gone half way, the gilded dome of its famous mosque and mausoleum was visible, glittering like a star on the horizon. The plain was perfectly dry and barren till we reached Langerood, about half way, where there is a small stream of water and some gardens. The village of Langerood is almost entirely in ruins: but in one of the gardens there is the tomb of a saint, with some large and fine *kâj* and *chenâr* trees.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The City of Koom: its Sanctuaries.—Sadrâbâd.—Kinâragerd.—Ziyoon.—Persian Chronology.

Koom is considered a holy city, on account of the many pious and exalted personages there interred, and the great number of sour ill-conditioned moollahs and seiyids resident therein: and it has been entitled *dâr-ul-eemân* (the abode of Faith). The city was built in the year of the Hijra 203 (A.D. 818), or some say at an earlier period: it was destroyed by the Affghans in 1722, and a great portion of it never having been rebuilt, or the rubbish even cleared away, it resembles, from the exterior, a huge ruin.

The entrance to the town is far from prepossessing. We passed through several streets of ruins; with here and there a tall dilapidated *imaumzâdeh* rising among the heaps of shattered walls and fallen houses. Nearly every dome and minaret has a stork's nest on the top of it; this bird is held in as high respect here, as in the Netherlands; and it is accounted unlucky to

disturb it.* The caravansary where we halted, was within two minutes' walk of the great mosque-tomb which stands on one side of the principal square of the city. This mausoleum contains the tomb of Fatima, surnamed *el-mâsooma* (the free from sin), the daughter of the Imaum Moosa Kâzim, and sister of the Imaum Reza. Her father is said to have brought her to Koom, in order to avoid the great persecution, by which the khaleefas of Baghdad endeavoured to extirpate the holy descendants of Alee; and here she dwelt and died in the odour of great sanctity. Some affirm that she was carried bodily to heaven, and that the tomb is in fact empty! Of course, I could not enter the mosque, though a moollah, with whom I spoke about it, told me that if I chose to repeat aloud the Moslem confession of faith, I might go in, and no one had any right to oppose me: but even the temptation of beholding the sepulchres of the sinless lady, of several Persian monarchs and other worthies, was hardly strong enough to induce me to make a Saracen of myself.

The large mosque with the gilt dome, in the centre of which lies the tomb of Fatima, was erected by Fat,h Alee Shah, upon the ruins of a former mosque, built, I believe, by Abbas the Great. The tomb itself is old, and was constructed at

* The annual migrations of the stork are supposed to be pilgrimages which the bird makes to Mecca. It is commonly called *hájee laglag* (pilgrim stork).

the time of the holy lady's interment. The dome of the mosque is covered with thickly gilded tiles (the moollah tried to make me believe that they were actual plates of pure gold), and has a very fine appearance, particularly from a little distance. The mausoleum is reported to be rich in wealth of all kinds; almost every king and great man, for ages past, having bestowed gifts of jewels and money upon it. Within the precincts of the mosque, are the tombs of Shah Suffee, Abbas the Second, Fat,h Alee Shah, and the late king Mahommed Shah.

Koom appears to be little else than a great collection of mosques and sepulchres; and most of these are in a state of dilapidation and decay. The muleteers asked my permission to remain here all next day, in order to perform their devotions at some of the sacred shrines; and to this, as I wished to see the place, I made no objections.

The bazârs of Koom are extensive and well supplied; and though the town is no great place of trade, some of its manufactures are much esteemed. Cloth, cutlery, soap, china, and glass are made here; and the white porous earthenware guglets (similar to those made in Egypt and India, and used for cooling water) of this place, are famous, and sent to all parts of the kingdom. White-turbaned moollahs and green-turbaned seiyids abound in this city, and its inhabitants are, as Hajji Baba describes them, in general a bigoted, sanctimonious, hypocritical crew. Notwithstand-

ing the outward austerity and pious demeanour of the good folks of Koom, there is fully as much secret vice and profligacy carried on here, and as much wine privately drank (though none can be publicly sold), as in any town in Persia; and in no place are more plots, intrigues, and villainy of every description concocted. With all this, mortified looks and mumbling of pious ejaculations are the prescribed fashion; and almost every one carries his rosary in his hand*, and appears abstractedly engaged in the *zikri-khooda* (repetition of the 99 names of God) as he walks along, passing the beads one by one through his fingers.

The walls of Koom are low and crumbling, and in many places have fallen down. On the north-east of the city, a small river flows, which is bridged over at the eastern extremity. The city covers nearly twice as much ground as Kashan or Sheerauz, but two thirds of it consist of ruins. Four gates are still standing, and as many more have fallen down. As I walked out in the morning, after passing through a disgusting wilderderness of ruins, I came to a *mazâr* or small cemetery, which I was informed was the resting-

* The *tasbeeh*, or rosary, consists of 99 beads; sometimes more, to stand for certain prayers. All Mussulmans usually carry a chaplet of this description. Amulets are also worn on the person as a protection from evil: these are portions of the Koran, or the whole book, written exceedingly small, enclosed in cases and bound on the arm — cornelians and bits of coloured glass, having the names of God, the false prophet and his family, and verses of the Koran engraved on them, &c.

place of a younger half-brother of the holy lady in the great mosque. He is poorly lodged in comparison with his sister; for his tomb is contained in a very mean-looking little brick and mud hovel. The people with whom I talked, complained bitterly of the oppression and rapacity of their present governor.

The sanctuaries of Koom, and the great mosque in particular, are famous places of refuge (or *bust* as it is termed) for all persons who have committed crimes, or fallen under the royal displeasure: such is the sanctity of the holy Fatima's mosque, that the Shah himself dare not arrest a criminal who has there sought protection. The Persian custom of *bust*, somewhat resembles the Jewish cities of refuge, the Alsatia of London, and the precincts of Holyrood at Edinburgh — but some of the Persian sanctuaries can shelter the very worst criminals, which none of these other asylums had power to do. Besides mosques and tombs of saints, many other places, such as the stables of the king or great men, the outer door of the *zenâna*, &c., are reckoned as *busts;* and to attempt to seize any person who has fled thither, is to offer the greatest insult to the owner of the premises. When any malefactor, who has taken refuge in an inviolable *bust*, such as the great mosque of Koom or other holy place, is to be arrested, he is sometimes starved out of his asylum: guards are stationed round the sanctuary, and no one is permitted to bring him food

or water. The present Shah, it is reported, is very desirous of abolishing the system of *bust* altogether: this, he may perhaps effect by degrees; but to attempt it at once "tout-à-coup" would probably endanger his crown; the people, and the moollahs particularly, being zealous supporters of the privileges of such places. The custom is undoubtedly a bad one. If it sometimes proves beneficial in protecting innocent persons from despotic wrath; it as often affords safety and encouragement to the worst malefactors.

The *mâliyât* of Koom amounts to about 3500 tomâns, of which, two-thirds are paid *nakdee* (in cash), and one-third *jinsee* (in produce).

At the caravansary, I encountered a Turkish merchant, who seeing a European, came up and addressed me in Italian which I did not understand, but I found he could speak Persian. He was going to Baghdad and thence to Constantinople, quite delighted to get out of this country, which he had travelled and traded in for nearly three years, visiting all the principal towns. The Turks heartily dislike the Persians, who fully reciprocate the sentiment; but this man's inveteracy amused me. Dr. Johnson, who loved a good hater, would have esteemed him greatly. He would not allow to Persia or its people a single commendable item: the country was a *jehannem* (hell), and its inhabitants only fit to associate with devils. He was particularly severe on the

authorities and rulers of the land, whom he pronounced to be paragons of tyranny and depravity; but I much doubt whether his own countrymen, in that grade, are any better: Turkish as well as Persian grandees render themselves sufficiently odious by their unsparing rapacity and injustice, and by the practice of every vice of which poor humanity is capable. Of the Turks, I know but very little personally; but from all I have heard, I believe their middle and lower classes to be very superior in point of honesty, at all events, to the people of this country. An American missionary who for several years laboured in both countries, has described the Turks, away from the large towns and unconnected with the court and government, as being a remarkably honest and truthful people; and the Persians as one and all, from the Shah to the beggar, the most false and deceptive race on the face of the earth.

In the evening we bade adieu to Koom; and crossing the bridge, proceeded on our way to the northwards; but no sooner had we left the city than we encountered a thunderstorm, followed by rain and wind in such violent gusts, that the party was obliged to take shelter for half an hour, under the wall of an old ruin. When the sky had cleared a little, we pushed on as quickly as we could, and halted for the remainder of the night, at the caravansary of Pooli-dellâk, three farsakhs and a half from Koom. The caravansary, which is small and dirty, stands alone, beside a

bridge of fourteen narrow arches, over a broad but shallow stream of brackish water. Poolidellâk signifies the "Barber's bridge," and it is said that this bridge was built by the barber of Abbas the Great, in fulfilment of a vow he had made, when once nearly drowned in attempting to cross the stream, at a time when it was much swollen by rain.

The country around is all one ugly desert, the sandy soil of which teems with nitre. Here commences the great *kaveer* or Salt Desert, extending in a north-westerly direction as far as the confines of Tartary and Turkistan.

Early in the morning, having heard the unwelcome news that two of the Shah's gangs of ragamuffins, misnamed regiments of soldiers, might be expected immediately at the caravansary, where they were to halt for the day, on their march to the capital. I judged it best to avoid their delectable company; and accordingly pushed on to Sadrâbâd, two farsakhs further on, where I breakfasted, intending to resume the journey immediately after; but here I was detained all day by rain, which continued till near midnight. Sadrâbâd is a large dirty caravansary, with a double court having ranges of cells round each inclosure, standing alone in the midst of a vast *kaveer* (salt plain), which tradition reports to have been formerly a lake, that dried up at the time of Mahommed's birth—one of the several miracles accompanying that event. An *aub-*

ambár is attached to the building, but the water collected therein, which has washed the surface of the plain, is so exceedingly brackish, that nothing but extreme thirst could render it palatable to man or beast. Low ranges of rocky hills intersect the desert in many places. I am no geologist, but it is evident to me that the soil and stone formation north of Ispahan differ considerably from what I saw to the south of that quarter. From Bushire as far as Ispahan, the rocks appeared to be chiefly limestone and marble: hereabouts, besides limestone, there seems to be no small quantity of granite, flint, and quartz.

Next day, we had a long march before us, of eleven farsakhs to Kinâragerd. The day was propitious, the rain having cleared off, while a fine breeze from the north cooled the air sufficiently to mitigate the warmth of the sun, and render the journey agreeable. The plain continued a perfect level for several miles; and the northern side of this flat presented, at midday, the appearance of a sheet of water, being covered with *saráb* (mirage) the result of the reflected rays of the sun, raising in the highly rarefied atmosphere a bright vapour. The muleteers pronounced this to be one of the delusions of the *ghool* or dæmon of the desert*, a supernatural being, of whom

* Hâfiz alludes to this in one of his odes —

دور است سرآب درین بادیه هشدار
تا غول بیابان نفریبد بسرابت

"The fountain-head is far off in this desolate wilderness:

the Persians stand in awe, particularly when travelling; as this fiend is supposed to be eminently hostile to all wayfarers, taking great delight in misleading, tantalizing, and eventually destroying them.

The *ghool*, a well-known character in the Arabian Nights, is a malignant dæmon infesting desert places; whose nature seems to partake of that of the Will o' the wisp and Brown man of the Muirs. He possesses the faculty of changing himself into various shapes; and his favourite diet is human carcasses exhumed from graves, varied occasionally by a repast on some unfortunate traveller. The *chârvadâr* assured me that this fiend puts his victims to death by licking the soles of their feet, till the skin is abraded by his rough tongue, and then sucking out from thence, all the luckless mortal's blood! With all this, the *ghool* appears to be a timid and stupid devil; and a brave or cunning traveller can generally get the better of him. Besides the *ghool*, there are sundry other malicious sprites, who make mankind their sport and prey; all of whom are evil Genii; in the existence of which, all good Moslems are bound to believe; though I have known some hardy enough to doubt it. The *jinn* or Genii, who are said to have been created some 2000

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beware! lest the dæmon of the desert deceive thee with the mirage."

There is a paronomasia in the original which cannot be preserved in the English.

years before Adam, and who formerly peopled this world, have, according to some accounts, been divided into two great classes — the *paree* (peri or fairy) who are good genii; and *deev* or evil genii. They have now a country of their own, named Jinnistan, the precise site of which is somewhat uncertain; but they wander over earth and sky at pleasure; and many take up their abode in Kâf, the vast circle of mountains encompassing the earth. Mahomedan notions of this terrestrial world are abundantly strange: they suppose it to be flat and immoveable, and only one-fourth part of it to be habitable — this is denominated the *roobba-meskoon* (inhabited quarter), while the other three quarters are untenanted by the human species.*

As we advanced across the plain, the mirage appeared to recede from before us, and draw off to either side. We next got upon undulating stony ground, considerably higher than the level we had traversed. In the distance, we beheld the huge range of the Alboorz mountains capped with snow; and behind the chain, towered the lofty pointed peak of Demavend (at least eighty miles from where we were) covered with perpetual

* The earth is upheld by a gigantic angel, who stands upon a rock, which rests on the back of an enormous bull, which stands upon a huge fish. The fish floats on a sea, beneath which is a dark abyss. Absurd and puerile stuff as this is, all good Moslems are bound to believe it, as it is recorded in the *hadees* or Traditions of the prophet. I have nevertheless known some who laughed at the whole story.

snows. We passed the caravansary of Houzi Sooltânee, stopping for a few minutes to obtain some drinkable water. Here I got a young antelope, to serve for next day's meal, from a *shikâr-chee* who had shot it, a few hours previous, on the desert. He told me that antelopes were once very numerous on these plains, but being now much hunted by parties from Tehrân, they had become scarce and shy. He was armed with a *shamkhâl* or rifle of great length and weight, which is fired from a rest, like a fork, attached to it near the muzzle.*

Beyond this a little way, we entered the *derra,e malak-ul-mout* or "Valley of the angel of death," a dreary desolate valley, full of ridges of rough stony hillocks, and about fifteen miles in extent. It was getting dark as we entered it, and so uneven and intricate was the road, that we were nearly five hours in passing through it. Along the north side runs a considerable stream; and as recent rains in the hills had rendered the waters too deep and rapid to be forded, we were obliged to make a detour till we arrived at a good stone bridge, which has lately been rebuilt. Two farsakhs further on, we reached Kinâragerd; and hearing that a party of cavalry was expected at the caravansary, from Tehrân, I resolved to seek

* This weapon, also called *jezâir* or *jezâil*, is much used by the mountaineers of Persia and Affghanistan. Of its fatal effects, our Indian troops, in the disastrous campaign of 1842, had sufficient experience.

quarters elsewhere, and proceeded to the village of Ziyoon, about a mile to the eastward, where I was fortunate enough to get into a tolerably good house. I felt rather tired after the long ride; and as soon as my bed was spread, gladly consigned myself to the arms of Morpheus, just as the sun was rising. At noon I got up, and after discussing a meal, prepared for the last day's journey, to the capital, distant between five and six farsakhs.

Ziyoon is a nearly ruined village, with not more than thirty inhabited houses in it. Near it stands a fort, containing about seventy houses in good condition, which, with the lands attached, is held in *tuyool* by the prime minister.* The village of Kinâragerd lies near the caravansary, and the land about it being watered by a large stream, there is a considerable extent of cultivation. On one side of the caravansary, stands an icehouse, like a great pyramid of mud. On the

* Official persons, and indeed any one, male or female, who must be provided for, are commonly paid or pensioned by *tuyool* assignments. A certain number of villages with the inhabitants living therein, and the ground cultivated by those inhabitants, are made over to them to manage and draw the rents of, and the requisite provision is made. It seems to me that a very similar system prevails in Russia. Catharine II. was wont to reward her numerous lovers in this way. To the five brothers Orloff, she gave estates with no less than 45,000 peasants on them, the serfs being as much a gift as the land they tilled; and on Potemkin and Zavodoffsky, she bestowed estates and peasantry to the value of nearly ten millions sterling!

plain, some of the troopers, who had arrived in the morning, were amusing themselves with feats of horsemanship, in which the Persians take much pride, and are very skilful. The men seemed to enjoy themselves as much as schoolboys at play, scampering about at the full speed of their horses, shouting and laughing. The sports were the *jereed-bâzee*, or darting a blunt stick like a javelin at one another; *doogla-bâzee*, throwing the stick on the ground, while at full gallop, so as to make it rebound over the head of the rider who catches it in the air; and the *keikâj*, or shooting while still at a gallop. In this latter exercise, the Persian horseman turns round, levels his gun at a pursuing enemy or any object behind him, and fires, without relaxing the speed of his horse; as Xenophon informs us the Parthians were wont to do with bows and arrows. Some of them, by dint of long practice and early training in this art, can hit a mark with great dexterity.

Having crossed the stream, we passed over a low range of rocks, and came upon the plain of Tehrân, a level, bare and ugly expanse, dotted here and there with villages and spots of cultivation. It was dark by the time we reached the city; and in approaching the gate, we had to pick our way among a number of deep pits dug for clay, and kilns for brick and lime. The portals being closed, I put up for the night in a caravansary outside, close to the *dervâza,e now* or "new gate" of the capital.

Persian Chronology.

The ancient Persian year commenced at the vernal equinox, when the sun enters Aries; and was solar, consisting of twelve months, each containing thirty days, while five extra days were added to one of the months. This era is said to have been instituted by Jemsheed, who appointed the festival of Now Rooz, still celebrated in this country. In the eleventh century, this calendar was reformed by Sooltân Jelâl-ud-deen of Khorassan, who ordered that once every four years, six extra intercalary days, instead of the usual five, should be added, so as to make up the complete solar year; which consequently corresponds closely with our Gregorian year. The following are the names of the ancient months, with the signs of the Zodiac by which they are governed—

1.	Feverdeen (Beginning with March 21 and ending with April 20)	Hamal (Aries).
2.	Oordeebihisht (April — May) .	. Sour (Taurus).
3.	Khordâd (May — June) . .	. Jouza (Gemini).
4.	Teer (June — July) . . .	. Saratân (Cancer).
5.	Murdâd (July — August) . .	. Asad (Leo).
6.	Shahreevar (August — September)	. Soomboola (Virgo).
7.	Mihr (September — October) .	. Meezân (Libra).
8.	Aban (October — November .	. Akrab (Scorpio).
9.	Azur (November — December) .	. Kous (Sagittarius).
10.	Dei (December — January) .	. Jedy (Capricornus.)
11.	Bahman (January — February)	. Dalv (Aquarius).
12.	Isfendâramooz (February — March)	. Hoot (Pisces).

These months were not divided into weeks, but every one of the thirty days had a different name. The names of the solar months are no longer in

use; but the signs of the Zodiac are still mentioned in allusion to seasons, astronomical calculations, &c. The Parsees of India, I believe, still use the solar year of their ancestors.

The Mahomedan year, now employed in this and all countries in which that faith prevails, is lunar, and consists of twelve months, each commencing with the appearance of the new moon. The whole year comprises only 354 days; and an intercalary day is added to the last month, eleven times in the course of thirty years. This era dates from the Hijra or flight of the false prophet from Mecca to Medina, occurring on July 16th, A.D. 622. Thirty-two of our years make thirty-three Mahomedan years. Their months, of course, do not in any way correspond with ours, but alter in season with every succeeding year. A month which now commences in midsummer, will, sixteen years afterwards, commence in midwinter. A more clumsy and ill-contrived mode of reckoning could scarcely be devised; and none but a semi-barbarous people would adopt a system of computation so much at variance with the order of nature. The following are the twelve lunar months —

1. Moharram.	7. Rejeb.
2. Sefer.	8. Shâban.
3. Rebee-ul-avval.	9. Ramazân.
4. Rebee-ul-âkher.*	10. Showâl.
5. Jemâd-ul-avval.	11. Zool-kaada.
6. Jemâd-ul-âkher.*	12. Zool-hejja.

* Also called, respectively, Rebee-us-sânee, and Jemâd-us-sânee.

The Mahomedans, like most others, have weeks of seven days. The following are the Persian names of the days —

Yakshambeh (Sunday).
Dooshambeh (Monday).
Sishambeh (Tuesday).
Chârshambeh (Wednesday).
Panjshambeh (Thursday).
Adeena, or Joomah (Friday).
Shambeh (Saturday).

Mahomedans consider the evening the commencement of each day, as the Jews formerly did. Each day ends, and the next begins, with sunset; so that what we call Sunday evening, they maintain to be Monday evening. The Persians formerly divided the whole day into four parts, but now that European watches are common among them, they reckon 24 hours as we do. They commonly set their watches at sunset, and one hour after is one o'clock.

Besides dating according to the lunar year, the Persians use, in books and documents, &c., a cycle of twelve solar years, each beginning at *now-rooz*, and each having a separate name in Toorkee or old Turkish, viz. —

1. Seechkan eel (the mouse year).
2. Ood eel (the cow year).
3. Pars eel (the leopard year).
4. Tevishkan eel (the hare year).
5. Looi eel (the crocodile year).
6. Yelân eel (the snake year).
7. Yoont eel (the horse year).
8. Koo,ee eel (the sheep year).
9. Peechi eel (the monkey year).
10. Takhâkoo eel (the fowl year).
11. Eet eel (the dog year).
12. Tungooz eel (the hog year).

The name of the Toorkee solar year is joined with the year of the Hijra in dates. The present is the "hog year;" and next 21st of March, the cycle will commence again.

CHAP. XXIX.

Tehrân. — British Residency. — Mirza Ibrahim. — Nigâristan. — Kasri Kajar. — Alboorz. — Demavend. — Shemiron. — Goolehek. — Visit of Ceremony to the Shah.

The "New gate" by which I entered the city, on the morning after my arrival, is the finest portal of Tehrân, though neither the materials nor style of architecture are worthy of much commendation. It is built chiefly of brick, and above the gateway is a large grotesque representation of the combat between Rustam and the White Dæmon, executed in coloured tilework; flanked by four little turrets also covered with enamelled tiles. I proceeded at once to the residency of the British Minister, to whom I had a note of introduction from Colonel H. at Bushire; and am now partaking of the hospitality freely offered to the few subjects of Queen Victoria whom chance may conduct hither.

The British Residency was erected, I believe, by Sir Gore Ouseley, when envoy to the Persian court. It is a handsome building, in comparison with Tehrân houses in general; constructed prin-

cipally in the English fashion, but with a flat roof in Persian style, above which floats the Union Jack of Old England. A façade, consisting of a porch supported on a range of pillars, occupies the entire front; and before this lies a neat small garden with paved walks. It is situated in the southern quarter of the city, and faces nearly due west. To meet with my own countrymen, and hold intercourse with civilized society, was a privilege which, having been for some time deprived of in this strange land, I could welcome with unfeigned pleasure. Besides the Minister and his family, there are two attachés, with the head clerk and medical officer now residing here: the British consul, and the secretary of legation are at present at home on leave; and the situation of a third attaché is vacant. It is much to be regretted that there is no chaplain, or any Protestant clergyman in this city: the embassies of other nations have usually been better provided in this respect; while our neglect of such matters only serves to confirm the not uncommon supposition of Mahomedans, that we English possess no religion whatever.

Shortly after my arrival, I had the pleasure of meeting with my old friend and preceptor, Mirza Ibrahim, formerly of Haileybury College; with whom I have held much interesting conversation, recalling old and happy times. The worthy Mirza, after his return to his native land, was appointed tutor to the present Shah, by his

father the late Mahommed Shah; but when the young gentleman came to the throne, he was easily induced to part with his instructor, and to exchange the study of the unhallowed sciences of the Franks, for the exercise of unlimited authority, and the pursuit of pleasures of every kind. A learned and enlightened man, like Mirza Ibrahim, stands little chance of being properly appreciated by his ignorant and moollah-ridden countrymen; who can only envy him his superior attainments, or denounce all such acquirements as heretical and dangerous. Yet twenty such men might work a wonderful reformation among the sharp-witted intelligent Persians—one, alone by himself, is powerless against popular ignorance, and the prevailing influence of narrow-minded moollahs.

The modern capital of Persia stands in the midst of a wide, stony, and nearly barren plain, bordered on the east and west by ridges of sterile bare hills, while on the north, at a distance of scarcely two farsakhs from the city, runs the vast chain of the Alboorz mountains.

Tehrân was a place of no importance, till the Kajar family gained the throne; when Agha Mahommed transferred the seat of government to this place, on account of its being near to the residence of his own tribe, which inhabits the south coast of the Caspian.

The outward appearance of the city is in no way prepossessing: nothing being visible but the

wall of unburnt bricks and mud, with which it is surrounded, having small round towers at intervals, and a dry moat outside; with a few mean-looking suburbs. There are six gates, none of which have any pretensions to elegance, except the southern or "new gate," which is more showy than neat. East of this, are the gates of Shah Abdul Azeem and Doolaub, both respectively leading to villages bearing those names; north are the Dowlet gate, leading into the Shah's palace in the citadel, and the Shemiron gate, whence a road proceeds to the district of that name, lying at the foot of the Alboorz; west is the Casveen gate. The city is altogether about a farsakh in circumference. Nor is the interior more imposing or attractive: the houses are built of unburnt bricks cemented with mud, and have a very mean appearance; the streets are narrow and filthy; resembling those of Ispahan and Sheerauz, but generally much more crowded with people — such as are not bazârs, present nothing but dead walls at the sides, and uncovered drains in the middle.

The bazârs are roofed in, with small cupolas all along, at intervals, to give light: they appear to be well supplied; but none are at all elegantly or even spaciously constructed. The chief mosque, named Masjidi Shah, has a handsome front of enamelled *kâshee-kâree*, and a gilt top to the dome — there are several other mosques, but none of any size or beauty. The college of

Madressa,e Khan is a fine large building; but there are very few other edifices of note. Caravansaries are very numerous, as this city is a great thoroughfare. Tehrân does not cover a greater extent of ground than Sheerauz or Kashan, but it is far more thickly peopled than either of these: the population is said to comprise between eighty and ninety thousand souls. This city possesses one advantage over most other Persian towns: being comparatively modern, it is less decayed, and presents fewer ruins to offend the eye of the visitor.

There are many Jews and Armenians resident in Tehrân, and also a few Gabrs or fire-worshippers; but excepting two or three French and Italian shopkeepers, and one Englishman, who acts as translator to the Shah, and manages the only newspaper, there are no Europeans or other foreigners, save those belonging to the missions to the court, or serving in the Shah's army; and of the latter, hardly any now remain; it having been found convenient, on principle of economy, to discharge European officers, or oblige them to discharge themselves, by withholding their salaries. Besides the English, there is a Russian and a Turkish mission: the French mission quitted the country after the downfall of poor Louis Philippe.

Tehrân is divided into four large *mehallas* or parishes. The *arg* or citadel is a large square place, surrounded with walls and a moat, and

containing the Shah's palace, and a number of other buildings. In front of the palace, is an open square, with quarters for soldiers along the sides, and some old and large pieces of cannon upon a *sukkoo* (elevated platform) in the centre. The street leading past the house of the prime minister, towards the palace, is furnished with oil lamps in front of the houses, which are lighted at night—the first and only street I have ever seen, in any Mahomedan city, thus provided.

Tehrân is a considerable place of trade, but possesses no manufactures of any importance. I hear that Persia has sent nothing to the forthcoming great Industrial Exhibition in London; on account of some trifle of expense of carriage, or some such miserable consideration, which could not be entertained for a moment by any government, save that of the Shah and his enlightened court. Persia will probably be the only country, whose industry is there unrepresented. An ambassador has lately been sent from hence to England: how he may succeed in upholding the dignity of his nation, remains to be seen; but the accounts I have heard of him here, are certainly the reverse of flattering: he is said to be, in point of intellect, "a father of asses," and in manners "a greater boor than a Turkoman!"

Fourteen regiments are at present stationed at Tehrân. They are far better dressed and armed than any I have seen before: they are regularly exercised; and, I believe, also paid with tolerable

regularity. Their bands play European as well as Persian tunes, and "God save the King" is a national air here as in England. Sir Henry Bethune Lindesay, an officer to whom the whole Persian army looked up as to some good genius, died here on the 19th of February, and was interred in the Armenian cemetery, every military honour being paid to his remains.

The police of Tehrân is said to be effective and well managed.

No one is permitted to go about at night without a lantern; and each watchman at his post utters a loud howl when anybody passes, to apprise his next comrade.

Several presses have been established in Tehrân; and printing is done in types as well as lithograph. Some of the productions of these presses are tolerably well executed, but the work is not equal to that of Bombay. Education is but little diffused among Persians, and a large proportion of the lower orders can neither read nor write. In this respect they are far behind the Hindoos.

There exists less bigotry and abhorrence of Christians in this, than in other cities of Persia. The people of the capital are more accustomed to the presence of Europeans, and have learned to respect them. There are few Lootees in Tehrân, and this mischievous class cannot here play tricks with impunity.

Near the Armenian quarter in the city, there is a place where a number of Turkoman families,

from the different tribes roaming about the north-east of this kingdom *, reside; being detained as hostages for the good behaviour of their respective clans. They are like prisoners at large — permitted to go about the city, but not to quit it — a confinement which must be very irksome to to these wanderers and dwellers in tents, who all hold the opinion of the old Douglasses, that "it is better to hear the lavrock sing than the mouse cheep;" and who rarely approach a town, except for the purpose of plundering it. The few whom I saw were ill-looking fellows, with the features peculiar to the Chinese and Tartar races — flat noses, small eyes, and high cheek-bones. As I mentioned before, there are some of the Gabrs or descendants of the fire-worshipping Persians, residing in the city. This race, in India (where they are called Parsees, from the country of Fars or Pars whence they originally came) may be recognized by the peculiar costume they all wear; but here they are not distinguishable by their dress, from the Mahomedans.

Living is more expensive here than at Ispahan or Sheerauz: houserent is much higher, and most

* The Turkomans are a wandering and marauding race, inhabiting the vast extent of country lying between the Caspian Sea and the Oxus. They are divided into several tribes, often at feud with each other, and always hostile to the rest of mankind. The Persians fear and detest them: the fact of their being Soonnees, rendering them still more obnoxious in the eyes of all good Sheeahs. The aggregate number of the Turkomans is not known.

of the necessaries of life and common articles of household expenditure are dearer.

Carriages are kept by several of the Europeans at Tehrân, as well as by two or three of the Persian nobles; and the level plain round the city admits of these vehicles being used. The races, which are regularly held, were over about a week before my arrival. The racecourse, which is a little way beyond the Casveen gate, is two miles in circumference, and the horses run four times round it; the long course trying their wind and stamina, as well as speed. The ground is not such as an English jockey would at all approve of: instead of a fine smooth sward, it is a gravelly and stony track, in many places far from even. On the north side, is the stand, consisting of some brick edifices, where the Shah, his ministers, and the foreign ambassadors sit in state. The Persians maintain that a horse bred of an Arab dam and a Turkoman sire, is the best in the world. The Turkoman horses possess immense powers of endurance: it is said that many of them will carry their riders eighty or a hundred miles daily, for a fortnight. At this time of the year, horses are fed on *kusseel* (or young shoots of barley, cut before the ear is formed) for a month or longer; and previous to putting them on this diet, they are ridden very hard for some time, till nearly emaciated. They take little or no exercise while on the green barley regimen. It is a common practice in Persia, to keep a pig in a stable, under

some superstitious idea that the presence of the unclean animal is favourable to the health and wellbeing of the horses! A similar notion seems to have prevailed in Europe, regarding a goat. The hog is held in utter abomination in this country, and is never seen in a domesticated state except in a stable. Wild hogs abound in many places.

The climate of Tehrân is very hot in summer, and by no means healthy in autumn. The low position of the city, and bad ventilation of its streets, may account for the frequency of fevers during the latter season. The smallpox at present prevails in the northern districts of Persia, and the Shah has ordered vaccinators to be sent to the different towns, to operate upon the children. Many years ago, an attempt was made by English physicians, to introduce vaccination, but their efforts were neutralized by Persian prejudice against infidels and infidel remedies. Now the Persian physicians would fain rob the memory of Dr. Jenner of its due, and claim for themselves the honour of having discovered this great prophylactic!

About half a mile from the north-east corner of the city, lies the Nigâristan, a palace in a garden, formerly a favourite retreat of Fat,h Alee Shah, who constructed it. Like most palaces of the kind, it consists of several imârets situated in grounds laid out in garden plots, with avenues of chenâr, poplar and other trees. In one imâret,

there is a large tank of water; and in another, a hall on the ground-floor, three sides of the walls of which, are occupied by a huge painting representing the levee of Fat,h Alee Shah; with all the figures as large as life. At the further end of the chamber, is the monarch himself on his throne, surrounded by many of his sons and vazeers; while up both sides of the room, march processions of guards and attendants; conducting various ambassadors from the states of Europe. The front side is occupied by an ooroosee. The apartments are all dingy and dirty: the present Shah rarely comes hither, and the place is consequently neglected.

In a *serdaub* or low room, on one side, approached by a descending stair, is a bath, where Fat,h Alee Shah was accustomed to lounge and divert himself with his ladies. Above the cistern of this bathing-room, a passage like a huge chimney, leads upwards through the wall to a chamber above, forming an inclined plane with a gradual slope, and is lined with perfectly smooth metal, which appeared to me to be sheet-zinc. The king used to seat himself under the embouchure of this passage; and the ladies having all gone up above, came sliding down, one after another; while he caught in his arms each damsel as she descended, and tossed her into the cistern. The ladies were not encumbered with any garments, while amusing his majesty with this pastime.

In an upper room of this imâret, the late Ma-

hommed Shah had his prime minister, the Kâ,im Mukâm, murdered privately. The premier was suspected of treachery towards the sovereign, whom he had long guided and counselled, till he had acquired complete ascendancy over him. The suspicion was fostered by the Shah's former tutor Hâjee Mirza Aghassee, who succeeded to the premiership; and as a very little of such evil report will suffice to rouse the wrath of a Persian despot, who will seldom wait to inquire into the truth or falsehood of these rumours, it was speedily determined that the unfortunate minister should be disposed of. The Kâ,im Mukâm was accordingly summoned to the Nigâristan, where the Shah was residing, and there strangled. His property, as customary on such occasions, was all confiscated to the royal use. It has become a proverbial saying, in reference to events not likely to happen, that so-and-so will occur when the Kâ,im Mukâm returns from the Nigâristan —equivalent to our phrase of "to-morrow come never."

The gardens of the Serdâr (general) Baba Khan, at a little distance from the Nigâristan, are the neatest I have seen in this country. Baba Khan is (I forget how) considered a Russian subject; and is, in consequence, not afraid to display his wealth. So pretty a spot, in the possession of any Persian subject, would soon become royal property. Flowers are, at this season, blooming in all the gardens in and near the city, in Oriental

profusion—there are roses in abundance, red, yellow and white; the *zambak* or white iris; the *boodauk* or Gueldres rose; the *goolmeena* or China aster; and the *arghavân*, a plant often mentioned in the verses of Persian bards: it is a large tree, the branches and stem of which, in spring, suddenly break out all over, in an eruption of pink blossom. Our botanists have named it "arbor Judæ" or Judas's tree, on account of some very apocryphal tradition, that on a tree of this kind, the arch-traitor hanged himself. I do not recollect to have seen any of this tree in Palestine.* Besides these, there are wallflowers, lilies and tulips of every hue, in plenty.

Two miles north-east of the city, is the Kasri Kajar, a palace built upon a rising ground, on the same plan, or nearly so, as the Takhti Kajar at Sheerauz. I could not, at this time, visit it, as the Shah, with his court, had gone thither the day before, with the intention of remaining there for a few days preparatory to his majesty's contemplated journey through his dominions.

A farsakh south-east of Tehrân, lies the village of Shah Abdul Azeem, surrounded by all that remains of the ancient and great city of Rye, the Rhages of the Apocrypha, whither Tobias set

* The proper botanical name of this tree is Cercis Siliquastrum. The Persians assert that the *arghavân* is peculiar to their country, and to be found nowhere else; but I have certainly seen the Judas tree in England, and I believe it to be very common in Southern Europe.

forth, guided by the angel, to obtain the ten talents deposited by his father.*

Shah Abdul Azeem is a large village, with a good bazâr, and an indifferent caravansary. There are many gardens here; and plantations of trees, chiefly the poplar, the mulberry, the walnut, and the *nârvend,* a thick-leaved species of elm.† In the midst, stands the tomb of a saint, with a mosque attached, which is a great *ziyâret-gâh* or place of pilgrimage, as well as a famous *bust* or asylum for all fugitives from justice or injustice. From this saint, the village derives its name; but who he was, I am not informed. A range of rocky hills, projecting from the Alboorz, runs north-east of the village; and along the foot of this range, and over a great part of the plain, may be seen portions of thick walls, and traces of fortifications and other buildings, the few existing remnants of old Rye.

This city was unquestionably of remote antiquity, though we may not, perhaps, implicitly credit Persian historians, who ascribe its foundation to Sheith-ben-Adam (Seth, the son of Adam). According to the same authority, it was at one time so unhealthy a locality, that the Angel of Death himself was obliged to run away from it! Alexander encamped here while in pursuit of Darius, and it afterwards became the capital of several of the Ashkânee (Arsacide

* Book of Tobit, v.

† I think it is what we call the "witch-elm."

or Parthian) sovereigns. Here also was born the famous Haroon-ur-Rasheed.* Persian chroniclers have asserted that in Haroon's days, the city of Rye contained ninety-six *mehallas*, each of which contained forty-six streets, and every street 400 houses. This, at the ordinary computation of seven souls to a house, would give a population of more than twelve millions; but the whole is a preposterous exaggeration, as such accounts but too often are.

Shah Rokh, the grandson of Teimour Lung, was the last prince that resided at Rye; and after his death, the place was abandoned, and rapidly sunk into decay. Except fragments of massive brick walls and other ruins of very solid brickwork, little exists to show where it stood; and these remains are fast disappearing, as many persons in Tehrân gain their livelihood by digging up and collecting the old bricks of Rye, which are of excellent quality, and are in great demand in the capital, for the construction of forges, ovens, &c. On one side of the village, near the hills, stands a large polygonal tower of brick, which goes by the name of the Nakkâra-khonehi

* Haroon-ur-Rasheed, the fifth of the Abbasside khaleefas, came to the throne of Baghdad in A. H. 170 = A. D. 786. At that time the empire of the Khaleefas was one of the most powerful that ever existed; and extended from the confines of India and Tartary to the Mediterranean, including also all northern Africa. The reign of Haroon was prosperous and splendid. He has been famed for liberality and justice; but his bloody cruelties throw an eternal stain on his memory. He died at Toos in Khorassan, after a reign of 22 years.

Yezeed, or "Orchestra of Yezeed," the second Ommeiyade khaleefa, a name hateful to all good Sheeahs—but which, I have heard, is in reality the sepulchre of Toghrul Beg, the Seljuk prince who conquered Persia in the eleventh century; and whom our English historians, with their wonted accuracy in regard to Eastern names and nations, have denominated "Tangrolipix the Turk!"

Upon a rock on the declivity of a hill, south of the village, is a piece of ancient sculpture; a tablet bearing a figure of a horseman riding at full speed, with his lance couched: he appears to be a Sassanian king, by his globe-topped headdress; but the tablet is much defaced. On another piece of rock, not far off, is an absurd representation of Fat,h Alee Shah seated in state, carved in imitation of the ancient style.

The heat of the weather prevented my inspecting the site of Rye as fully as I could have wished; but there is little to be seen, save the traces of what once was a great city.

The great chain of the Alboorz may be considered a connecting link between the Caucasus of Georgia and the Himalayas of India. It separates the province of Irauk from the forests and rice-swamps of Mazanderân. The summit of this range is covered with snow from November until midsummer; but on Demavend, the highest of the chain, the snow is perpetual. Demavend stands behind the range, in a direction

north-east of the capital; and its high conical peak, clothed in eternal snows, towers above the rest. The height of this mountain is about 15,000 feet: the Persians maintain that it is impossible to ascend to its top; but this has frequently been done; and in the summer-time, the ascent is said to be by no means difficult. Quantities of sulphur are to be found, half way up the peak, and there can be no doubt that this mountain has been a volcano. Mirza Sâdek of Ispahan, a geographer, has declared Demavend to be the highest mountain in the world, being no less than four farsakhs in height! He also seems to think it volcanic, as, according to his account, a bright light and smoke sometimes issue from the summit. It is supposed that in one of the caverns of this mountain, the evil genie Sakhra was imprisoned by Solomon; and that in another, the cruel monarch Zuhauk, who put Jemsheed to death and usurped the sovereignty of Eerân's fair realm, remains suspended by the heels until the Day of Judgment.

Excellent coal is found in the Alboorz mountains, and is commonly used, in preference to charcoal, by the blacksmiths in the city, and in the arsenal. The gradually melting snow produces numerous rivulets, pouring from above, to fertilize the valleys at the foot of the long range.

Another day I visited the palace in the *arg*

(citadel) which his majesty had recently quitted. This palace consists of three imârets with large audience chambers, and other buildings, arranged in separate courts, with gardens attached to them. I have already described so many edifices of the kind, that a very brief notice of these will be sufficient. The halls of audience are fitted up with large and splendid ooroosees; the walls are covered with mirrors and paintings, the floors with fine carpets, and the roofs with carving, gilding, and enamel work. The gardens are laid out in straight paved avenues, beds of flowers and shrubs, and cisterns of water. The first chamber we entered, is nearest to the gate of the *arg:* it has an open façade with pillars, looking on a paved court; some large and handsome chandeliers are suspended from the roof; and among the portraits adorning its walls, the most conspicuous are likenesses of Fat,h Alee Shah and the peerless Mr. Strachey.

In one corner stands a clock, a splendid bauble, with moving figures upon the top, including a peacock, which spreads and closes its train alternately. This magnificent toy was originally intended for the Emperor of China, and conveyed to the flowery realm by Lord Amherst; but as it pleased the "brother of the sun and moon" to reject the presents of England in a fit of ill-humour, the article in question was eventually presented to the Shah. In the centre of the hall, is a throne of white marble supported on figures

of human beings and genii, and having similar figures of smaller size round its sides — somewhat in contravention of Moslem religion and notions of propriety. The carpet covering the floor is one of the finest I ever beheld. From this hall, we passed through a range of building, into an extensive garden, where two palaces, upon either sides, face each other. Both contain audience-chambers nearly forty feet long, approached by low flights of steps, and ornamented in the gayest manner. The ooroosees occupying the whole of the front, are splendid arrangements of coloured glass in the most beautiful patterns; and the arabesque embellishments of the rooms are as showy as paint and glitter can make them.

Chandeliers and lustres are abundant; and in one chamber stands a fountain of singular form, constructed entirely of glass. In the same room I noticed a portrait of Mahommed Shah, done in oil colours by a European artist, and said to be a good likeness. In another hall, there are some large pictures, representing classic subjects, which I took for oil paintings, but was informed that they are fine specimens of tapestry, sent to the Shah by Louis Philippe. In the midst of the garden is a Koolahi Feringee, with a marble tank, and ooroosees on every side, as usual.

These imârets possess neither beauty nor solidity of architecture. Their interiors are gaudy and showy; but the buildings themselves are plain and flimsy structures of brick, which, with-

out the quantity of ornamental coloured glass, paint, and gilding, would look sufficiently paltry and common-place.

The Shah being absent, we could not be permitted to inspect the crown jewels, which I confess I should like to have seen. We were however conducted to an *ambâr-khoneh* or storehouse, filled with all manner of nicknacks, which the Shahs, during several past reigns, have received as presents from different European monarchs. The place reminded me of Boz's "Old Curiosity Shop:" several long rooms were completely filled with heaps of incongruous articles, pictures, glass, china, patent machines of many kinds, ornaments, furniture, toys, all so crowded together that it was difficult to walk across the apartments. The things I admired most, were some large and beautiful bowls of the finest china; presented, as I was informed, by the East India Company. The Shah ought to possess an immense quantity of such articles, presented to his predecessors by almost every foreign power; but as most of these things, after having been once or twice inspected, are usually put aside and forgotten, vast numbers of them are pilfered by the numerous attendants about the court.

After some days' residence in Tehrân, I went to spend two or three days at Shemiron*, a well wooded and watered tract lying at the foot

* The name, I believe, is properly Shemâ,e Eerân (the lamp of Persia).

of the Alboorz, which constitutes the *yeilauk* or summer residence of all the European and many of the Persian inhabitants of the city; indeed, of every one who can afford to quit the town at that season. This year, it will be nearly deserted; as the Shah's journey southward will carry away the court, and most of the wealthy and influential classes. Shemiron extends along a declivity skirting the mountains; and is fully four farsakhs in length; containing nearly forty villages, clustered together amid gardens and groves of trees, with streams of water from the heights above. My temporary residence was at Goolehek, a small village, which Mahommed Shah made over to Sir John Campbell, in the summer of 1835, for the future behoof and use of the British embassy: it is not quite two farsakhs distant from Tehrân.

On the way, I passed the Kasri Kajar, where the Shah is at present resident. It stands on a prominent part of a table-land lying between the mountains and plain surrounding the city; and is of square form, with a balakhoneh in front, and environed with a high wall. The entire building is arranged in terraces, rising one over another, behind a courtyard containing a large tank of water; and the whole overlooks an extensive garden. The ground in the vicinity of this palace, was covered with the tents of the troops and attendants on the court.

On reaching Shemiron, the change of temperature was very perceptible—in the city, the air

was disagreeably hot, while here it was delightfully cool. I got into a good two-storied house in Goolehek, standing at one end of a large and well-planted garden. The revenue of this village is only thirty tomâns a year; and this small sum, the British mission expends in keeping the roads in repair. There are several pretty gardens and villas here, belonging to private individuals in Tehrân: one of the neatest, is the property of one Khoja Carrapiet, an Armenian merchant. The mission, when residing here, usually pitch tents in a grove of willows and poplars, by the side of a brook, at the southern extremity of the village.

A mile north-west of Goolehek, lies the village of Tâjreesh, in which I inspected a garden containing an *imaumzâdeh* erected over the grave of Sâlih, a nephew of the Imaum Reza. On one side of a court stands the building surmounted by a dome; and opposite to it is an open place for prayer, constructed of brick. In the centre of the court there is a magnificent *chenâr* tree, said to be the largest in Persia: what its height is, I do not know; but it towers high above all the surrounding plantations; and the girth of the trunk, near the ground, is little short of sixty feet. Beside it, is a small tank of beautifully pellucid water. All the water of Shemiron, which comes down from the mountains, is exceedingly clear and pure: one may see to the depth of many feet, as distinctly as if not more than a few inches.

A little way beyond Tâjreesh, on a slope of bare gravelly ground, stands a fort containing a palace, built by Mahommed Shah, and in which that monarch died on the sixth of September 1848. Though comparatively new, it is going to ruin through neglect, for no one lives in it, except one veteran soldier, placed here to prevent the glass and woodwork being stolen. The fort is constructed of brick, with iron-plated gates: the building was never completed, and is now becoming dilapidated. The balakhoneh or upper story is in tolerable repair; and in one of the rooms of this flight the Shah died. It is a very plain whitewashed apartment, with a large ooroosee on one side, and a smaller one opposite.

About a mile north of this palace-fort, lies the village of Wilinjek, upon the side of a small ravine in the mountains; and this spot affords a good view of the plain and city of Tehrân, not visible from Goolehek on account of the intervening rising ground. A horde of Karachees (gypsies) was encamped near the village, and as I approached, they at first regarded the unusual apparition of a Feringee, with mingled apprehension and curiosity; till growing bolder, they proved to be such importunate beggars, that I was glad to get rid of them. On the bank of a small stream, above Wilinjek, stands a singular mass of stone, called the *peera-zen*, or "old woman:" it resembles a mushroom in shape, and appears to be an enormous boulder, weigh-

ing many tons, which has rolled down from the mountain, and casually rested upon the top of a slender pedestal. Tradition sayeth that this was a churlish old lady who once refused to give bread to one of the holy Imaums (I forget which of the twelve) when that sacred personage was hungry; whereupon the saint, true to the amiable Moslem creed of vengeance and the hundredfold retaliation of injury, prayed that she might be turned into stone—a prayer which was, of course, immediately heard!

East of Goolehek, scarce a quarter of a mile, is the village of Zerganda, given by the Shah to the Russian embassy. Here, on a green spot surrounded by trees, stands a small house erected by the Russian minister, whose suite pitch their tents on the sides of two streams hard by.

After my return from Shemiron, I accompanied the British Minister and suite, on a visit of ceremony to the Shah, on the occasion of his majesty's approaching departure from the capital. We rode out to the Kasri Kajar, and proceeded, in the first instance, to wait on the deputy minister of foreign affairs, who, with the master of ceremonies, received us in a small tent lined with chintz, placed near the entrance to the palace. Here we were accommodated with chairs, and sat for half an hour, while the usual routine of kaleons, tea and coffee, was gone through, after which, word was brought that the Shah was ready for our reception. We then proceeded on foot into the enclo-

sure of the palace; the deputy minister and master of ceremonies walking before us, both clad in long robes of scarlet, with singular head-dresses, formed of cashmere shawls wound round the common Persian cap so as completely to conceal the cap itself. It was formerly the fashion for all Europeans admitted into the royal presence, to wear *châkchoors* or stockings of scarlet cloth fastened at the knee; but this absurd piece of court dress is now abolished, and we had merely loose slippers over our boots, which were slipped off at the door on entering. The usual salutation made by Europeans to all Persian grandees, is similar to our military salute, raising the right hand, with a sweep of the arm, to the front of the cap. The covering of the head is never removed, whether in or out of doors.

We were ushered into a tent of crimson cloth lined with silk, pitched on the terrace of the palace; at the further extremity of which, was the Shah in person, seated alone in a large gilt chair. Having been marshalled in by our conductors, whose duty it was to introduce us, a chair was placed for the British Minister, who, as the representative of his Sovereign, was the only individual privileged to be seated in the Shah's presence; while the rest of us stood immediately behind, ranged in a row, like so many sentinels. Nearly the length of the tent intervened between our Minister and the Shah, both of whom were seated at opposite ends, for it is not permitted to

approach too near to royalty. We were briefly introduced by the master of ceremonies, and his majesty bid us welcome: I was presented as "one of the rulers of India;" the Shah being, as I suppose, left to imagine that I had attained the goal of many an Indian Englishman's ambition — a seat in the dingy halls of the Old Lady of Leadenhall Street. The ceremony of introduction having been performed as rapidly as possible, a brief conference took place between the Shah and Minister; the former asking a few questions, to which the latter replied. A smart shower of hail meanwhile rattled on the covering of the tent, obliging both to shout at the top of their voices, in order to make themselves audible. The audience did not last above three minutes, and we took our leave with the same curt ceremony as on entering.

The Shah is now in his twenty-second year, but looks older. His complexion is very sallow, and his countenance, though not disagreeable, cannot be pronounced handsome: he wears moustaches, with but the rudiments of a beard. He was plainly dressed in a frockcoat in European style, over which was a joobba of dark shawl stuff trimmed with sables, and on his head the ordinary black lambskin cap.

Leaving the palace, we proceeded to the tent of the prime minister, Mirza Takee, surnamed the Ameer Atâbek, who inhabited a small garden, a few hundred yards distant from the Kasri Kajar.

He received us with much politeness; chairs were brought for the whole party, and kaleons and tea handed round. The Ameer is a large, portly, good-looking man, with an open intelligent countenance: he sat and talked with us for nearly half an hour; and though his conversation was principally directed to the British Minister, he addressed some part of it to every separate individual present: the true way, according to Theodore Hook, of making one's self agreeable. He is said to be jealous of Europeans generally; and has persuaded the Shah to discard several from his service: he is also particularly anxious to exclude all foreign manufactured goods from Persia, by way of encouraging native industry—a short-sighted policy, in no way tending to the advancement of commerce or of civilization. Our visit being ended, I took my departure along with the suite, leaving the Minister in private conference with the Ameer.

CHAP. XXX.

Short Account of Persia. — Sketch of Persian History.

The kingdom of Persia is named by its inhabitants Eerân (vulgo Eeroon), and our appellation "Persia," borrowed from the Latin, has evidently been derived from Pars or Fars, a large province extending from the confines of Irauk to the shores of the Gulf. The country mentioned in Scripture by the name of Elam, probably comprehended no more than the south-western portion of the kingdom, including some part of Turkish Arabia. The northern region comprises the provinces of Mazanderan, Geelan, and Asterabâd, lying between the Alboorz chain and the south shores of the Caspian Sea; and was anciently named Hyrcania. On the north-west lies Azerbaijan, comprising the ancient Atropatene and part of Armenia, and extending to the Turkish frontier: Tabreez is the capital city of this province. Eastward extends Khorassan, including ancient Aria and Bactria, as far as the confines of Affghanistan, which country in former times formed part of it, reaching to the river Indus.

Mush,hed is its principal city. Irauk, the central province, contains the cities of Tehrân the modern capital, Ispahan, Hamadan, and Kermanshah. It includes ancient Media, and probably also Parthia, but the situation of this latter region is doubtful. South of this lies Fars *, of which Sheerauz is the capital: west of Fars, lies Khuzistan, bordering the Tigris; and on the east is Kerman, the ancient Caramania. The eastern regions of Seistan, Mekran, and Beloochistan (ancient Gedrosia and Drangiana), though once belonging to Persia, cannot now be said to form part of the empire, as the Shah possesses no authority over these wild and independent countries.

The history of Persia, in early times, is so much enveloped in fable, that it is no easy matter to decide what portion of it may be regarded as true. Ferdousee's great poem, the famous Shah Nameh, is considered authentic by many Persians; and this work presents them with the history of their country, from the creation down to its subjugation by the Moslems, detailed in a series of romantic chronicles, partaking largely of the fabulous and supernatural. The Shah Nameh is indeed a splendid epic, but as matter-of-fact history, there is none of it that can be relied on. If the rhapsodies of Ferdousee are not to be

* From this province, the language of Persia (*farsee*) derives its appellation, and here it is spoken in greatest purity.

trusted; as little can we depend on the accounts which we have received from the historians of Greece and Rome, which are too confused to be in any way satisfactory. In all of these annals, chronology is so disordered, that it is difficult to determine any part of it.

Persia was unquestionably one of the earliest peopled countries; and it has generally been supposed to be the land of Nod, eastward of Eden, whither the first-born fratricide fled, and with his descendants built the first city on record. I cannot, however, go the length of acquiescing in the plausible, but rather startling, theory of Mr. O'Brien, put forth in his passing strange production, "The Round Towers of Ireland;" that Persia was the Paradise of our first parents — that the Irish are of pure Persian descent — that the Celtic or Irish language was the original tongue of Persia, and of mankind — and that Green Erin herself has derived her name from the parent land of her inhabitants, Eerân! Mr. O'Brien's exuberant imagination goes occasionally beyond that of Ferdousee; and his Round Towers would be highly diverting, if a little less blasphemous and indecent.

The first dynasty of Persian Kings, according to their own chronicles, followed by their historians and poets, was the Peeshdâdee, the founder of which was Kayoomers, supposed to have been great-grandson to Noah. He undertook to civilize mankind, and to establish a form of government;

making the city of Balkh his capital. Tahmuras, the third Peeshdâdee monarch, warred with the powers of darkness and prevailed against them; hence gaining the surname of Deev-bund, or the "dæmon-enchainer." The fourth of this dynasty was the famous Jemsheed, whose name is familiar to all in the least degree conversant with Eastern romance. The great wealth, power, wisdom, and wondrous deeds of this prince, form the themes of many a song and tale — besides, the supernatural sway he maintained over the Genii; and the magic cup he possessed, which, like that of the patriarch Joseph, was used for divination. His subsequent misfortunes, deposition and murder by Zuhauk, whom some suppose to be the Nimrod of Scripture; the reign of this usurping tyrant, which lasted a thousand years! and his final overthrow in a rebellion headed by a blacksmith—are also favourite topics with poets and storytellers. There is doubtless some historical truth in these legends; as it is well known that the leathern apron of the blacksmith was made the national standard of Persia, and was borne at the head of the royal army on great occasions; being preserved with the utmost care, and venerated as the Oriflamme was wont to be by the warriors of France. This singular banner was thus preserved for many centuries, and finally fell into the hands of the Mussulmans, at the battle of Cadesia, by whom it was destroyed. The Peeshdâdee kings were twelve in number, and

they ruled the land for about 2450 years, according to Persian chroniclers; for in these good old times, men lived to ages exceeding that of Methuselah.

The Keiyânee dynasty, supposed to be that of the Medes, succeeded, and consisted of nine kings according to Persian annals; but their accounts of these monarchs differ so widely from the records of western historians, that it is hardly possible to identify any of them. Sir J. Malcolm has endeavoured to identify Kei Khosrow with Cyrus, and is probably right in this opinion; but who was Cambyses his successor? and who was Xerxes of the Grecian invasion? There are no sovereigns on Persian record who at all resemble them.* Gushtasp, in whose reign Zoroaster appeared, is probably Darius Hystaspes; and Ardesheer, surnamed *dirâz-dest* (the long-handed), is unquestionably Artaxerxes Longimanus, supposed to be the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther.

The last monarch of this race was the ill-fated Darius, whom the Persian authorities make out to have been a near relative of Alexander, who overthrew him.

* Greek historians are no more to be trusted than Persian. I have no doubt that an invasion of the Greek states took place, under some Persian chief or general whom they have dubbed King Xerxes; but the whole story is evidently a gross exaggeration. For my part, I look on the narrative of Thermopylæ and the deeds of Leonidas and his 300 Spartans against five millions of Persians, as being nearly as thorough a romance as any episode of the Shah Nameh.

The reign of Iskander or Alexander the Great, is, in the hands of Persian historians, a complete tissue of romance and fable. He has been styled Zool-kurnein, or the "two-horned," an idea probably derived from the coins and medals of his day, in which he is often represented with two curled ram's horns: but Moslems are obliged to acknowledge two Zool-kurneins, both famous princes; as their blundering volume, the Koran, mentions one who is supposed to have lived many ages prior to the time of Alexander.* Mahommed, or whoever was really the author of that book, probably intended them for one and the same person. The Seleucidæ, or successors to Alexander in Persia, were overthrown by Ashk or Arsaces, who established the dynasty of the Ashkânee or Arsacidæ, consisting of thirty princes, whose collective reigns occupied about 480 years. Regarding these, the historians of Persia have recorded little or nothing.

The last race of the fire-worshipping monarchs of Persia was the Sassânee, commencing with Ardesheer Babekân, the descendant of Sassan, who expelled the Ashkânee, about A. D. 228. His son Shapoor obtained several important victories over the Romans, and at length captured the emperor Valerian. He was, according to Persian accounts, a wise and magnanimous prince, although European historians represent him as a bloody

* The Koranic Zool-kurnein is supposed to have been a prince of Arabia Felix, contemporary with Abraham.

and merciless tyrant. In the reign of Bahram (the Varanes of Greek writers) the fourth monarch of this family, the famous impostor Mani, founder of the sect of Manichæans, made his appearance, and was put to death by the king. Bahram Goor, the fourteenth Sassânee king, was famous for his liberality, gallantry, and love of the chase; all duly praised in ballads and stories innumerable. The latter penchant was fatal to him, for he lost his life while hunting on the plains of Oojân. Noushirvan, the twentieth of the Sassanian dynasty, surnamed "the Just," was distinguished for equity, wisdom, and munificence. He erected many colleges, caravansaries, and other buildings of public benefit, and gave great encouragement to learning and philosophy. He was not less renowned for policy in war. He conquered Syria, and compelled the emperor Justinian to purchase an inglorious peace. Noushirvan's mother was a peasant girl, whom the Persian sovereign, like another king Cophetua, fell in love with, and eventually espoused. The reign of Noushirvan commenced in A. D. 531; and towards the close of it, the impostor Mahommed was born in Arabia. The anecdotes and stories of the virtuous, just, and liberal deeds of Noushirvan, current in Persia, would fill a goodly volume; for though a fire-adoring infidel, his name is held in the highest respect among Mussulmans. His modesty was not inferior to his generosity and sense of justice. A well-known author has

related that Noushirvan's notions of propriety were so acute, that he would never hold dalliance with any of his ladies, in a bower where the narcissus grew — as that flower is fabled to have eyes in the centre of its corolla! a sense of delicacy equal to that of the fastidious American lady, who, for a similar reason, objected to walking over a potatoe field!

Khosrow Perveez, the grandson of Noushirvan, waged war with the Roman powers, at first with the greatest success. He invaded the dominions of the Emperor, wasted a vast amount of territory, overran the Holy Land, took Jerusalem and burned the Christian churches, carrying off immense booty. He next reduced Egypt and a great part of northern Africa; and, had he possessed a navy, would probably have subdued all Europe. His prosperity was however destined to undergo a reverse; and his power was, in turn, overthrown by the Emperor Heraclius, who invaded Persia with a large army, and avenged the humiliations and losses which the Roman empire had sustained. Khosrow Perveez was assassinated by his own son, who had conspired against him. Mahomedans attribute the misfortunes of this monarch to his daring impiety in having torn up a letter, sent him from the blessed hands of the prophet himself, inviting him to embrace the newly-divulged faith of Islâm. Khosrow Perveez is a favourite with rhymers and romancers; and many are the tales and

poems celebrating the acts of this gallant prince: his fair mistress Shireen, and his humble rival Ferhâd the stonecutter: his matchless Arab steed Shubdeez; his twelve hundred elephants; his sword of unrivalled temper; his incomparable minstrel Barbud, the Orpheus of the East; and his magnificent throne, supported on forty thousand silver columns!

The twenty-ninth Sassanian king, and last of the genuine Persian monarchs, was the unfortunate Yezdigird, in whose reign the ferocious Arabs, brimfull of zeal in their new religion, and stimulated by hopes of unlimited pillage, invaded and overran Persia. The decisive battle on the plains of Cadesia on the border of the Euphrates, fought in A. D. 636, sealed the fate of Eerân. This battle endured for three days: the Arabs are said to have lost about 8000 men, while the loss on the Persian side amounted to nearly 100,000. Yezdigird fled and concealed himself for some time: he was at length murdered, for the sake of his rich attire and ornaments, by a miller, in whose mill he had taken refuge. The whole country now yielded to the Moslem invaders; colonies of Arabs poured in from the deserts of their own country, and Islâm was established upon the ruins of the fire-temples, A. D. 651.

For two centuries, Persia continued to be a province of the Khaleefas of Damascus and Baghdad; after which the people revolted from the

dominion of the "commanders of the faithful;" and Yacoob Leith, a bold, sagacious, and enterprizing adventurer, originally a coppersmith by trade, became the first independent Moslem king of Persia. The empire was afterwards divided between the rival families of Samânee and Dilemee, the first of which was of ancient Persian descent, and ruled over the northern provinces. The Dilemee race, who governed the southern portion, sprung from a poor fisherman named Abu Shujah Booya, whose three sons distinguished themselves as warriors, and eventually became rulers of the southern states. Azud-ud-Dowlah, grandson of the fisherman, governed all southern Persia, and compelled the Khaleefa to acknowledge him as a sovereign. He revived the ancient Persian title of *shah-in-shah*, or "King of Kings," which had been disused since the Mahomedan conquest, and which still constitutes one of the titles of the sovereign of this country.

The celebrated Mahmoud of Ghiznee next made himself master of the empire; but on his death, in A.D. 1032, the whole of his vast dominion fell in pieces. Toghrul Beg, chief of the Seljuk Tartars, then seized upon Persia, and became its acknowledged ruler, ten years after Mahmoud's decease. His son Alp Arslan, and grandson Malek Shah, were two of the best and wisest monarchs this country has ever witnessed; and during their reigns Persia prospered. On

the death of Sanjar, the son of Malek Shah, in 1175, the country fell into disorder; and the different parts of it were ruled by various petty princes, called Atâbeks, until the scourge of the east, Changheez Khan *, with his destructive hordes of Tartars and Moghuls, overwhelmed the land, spreading fire, slaughter, and pillage in every quarter. Hulâkoo Khan, the grandson of Changheez, completed the conquest of Persia, and afterwards subdued and took Baghdad, putting to death the last of the once all-powerful Khaleefas. He also employed his forces in extirpating that singular and dangerous set of desperadoes, the Assassins, well known in the annals of the Crusades.

The career of these sanguinary fanatics was a truly extraordinary one. Their first leader was Hasan Subah, surnamed the *sheikh-ul-jebel*, or "old man of the mountain," who lived in the reigns of Alp Arslan and Malek Shah; and established his stronghold on a mountain, one of the Alboorz chain; possessing also no inconsiderable power in Syria and Egypt. The authority which this desperate character maintained, and the terror he inspired among all around, seem almost incredible. After his death, the Assassins were ruled by other chiefs; and the sect increased, until their number exceeded 40,000. Their audacity kept pace with their growing strength.

* Usually called, by European writers, Zingis or Jenghis.

By their system of wholesale murder, and universal espionage, no man's life was safe from them. Kings and nobles — priests and warriors, fell victims to their secret daggers, and nearly every region of Islâm was kept in a state of alarm. Hulâkoo resolved on their destruction; and of all the numerous massacres committed by this sanguinary Tartar, this is the only one that can be excused, if not commended. Although he intended the annihilation of this obnoxious crew, and hunted them down, slaughtering them without mercy, it seems that some contrived to elude his vengeance. A tribe, descended from the old Assassins, is still to be found in the mountains on the north-west of Syria; and it has been supposed by some, that the notorious T,hugs of India may be a remnant of the dreaded followers of the Old man of the mountain.

Mahommed Khoodabunda, the grandson of Hulâkoo, was the first Persian monarch that professed the Sheeah faith; which did not, however, become the established religion of the country until some time after. Upon his death, Persia again fell into a state of confusion and misrule, until taken possession of by the ambitious and all-conquering Teimour Lung—one of the greatest of the bloodspillers and conquerors, whom the Almighty has appointed on earth, to chasten and scourge erring mankind. Teimour Lung, whom we have usually called Tamerlane, succeeded to the throne of Chaghatai at Samarcand in 1370,

being then in his thirty-fourth year. He spent ten years in settling his own kingdom and putting down opponents; and then proceeded to extend his dominions by seizing on all others. In addition to Persia, he extended his victories over Asia Minor, Syria, Armenia, Georgia, Tartary, Hindostan, and a great part of Russia. He penetrated to the confines of Siberia, and plundered Moscow. He had placed on his own head no fewer than twenty-seven crowns; and was about to essay the conquest of China, with an army of 200,000, when arrested by the hand of death in his seventieth year, A.D. 1405. Teimour, besides possessing consummate military skill and judgment, was, in many respects, a wise and politic conqueror; but his bloodthirsty cruelty has left a deep stain on his name.

The descendants of Teimour were unable to maintain their hold upon the vast empire bequeathed to them. Persia was once more dismembered into petty sovereignties, and continued in this state until Ishmael Suffee, the son of Sultan Hyder, obtained the throne, A.D. 1502; and all Persia submitted to his sway. Ishmael claimed to be a direct descendant of Alee and the holy Imaums, and professed the Sheeah doctrines, which then became the national religion, and has since continued so to be.

The Suffee dynasty, established by Ishmael, lasted for more than 230 years; and from the surname of these kings, has been borrowed our

term "Sophi," generally applied to Persian monarchs. The name was derived from a forefather of Ishmael, a famous saint and holy personage, named Suffee-ud-deen, who was cotemporary with Teimour Lung. Shah Ishmael was brave and warlike, but unscrupulous and cruel. An Uzbek prince was his determined opponent for many years; and having, at length, destroyed this enemy, he had a drinking-cup made of his skull, which he used on festive occasions—an act worthy only of a Scandinavian pirate-king. In the reign of Shah Tahmasp, the son of Ishmael, Anthony Jenkinson, an envoy of Queen Elizabeth, visited the Persian court; but the intolerant Sheeah monarch refused to acknowledge any infidel ambassador, and Jenkinson was dismissed somewhat unceremoniously. Tahmasp reigned fifty-three years; and after his death, his children contended for the crown, butchering one another "à la mode de Perse." Such of them as succeeded in seating themselves on the throne, held it but for a brief space, their reigns being cut short by poison or dagger. At length, Abbas, a younger brother of one of the princes who had been assassinated—after a struggle of three years' duration, in which he was aided by his tutor Moorshid Khan—gained possession of the sovereign power, A.D. 1585. In the East (and sometimes in the West likewise) those who have been particularly instrumental in elevating a prince to the throne, frequently receive death,

as the only reward for having rendered themselves too useful. The first act of Abbas, after the crown had been placed on his head, was to have Moorshid Khan assassinated; striking him the first blow with his own hand. All the family and relatives of the unfortunate tutor were also put to death, as usual on such occasions.

Shah Abbas has been styled "the Great," and in some degree he, no doubt, deserved the title. He was a brave and resolute warrior, as well as a deep and wily politician. Finding that no inconsiderable portion of the Persian empire had been wrested from his predecessors, by the Turks and Uzbeks, he waged successful wars against these intruders, and retrieved all former losses. He was in no way scrupulous as to the exercise of a little expedient treachery when required. The Koords had assisted the Turks in the north-west; and Abbas found it advisable to get rid of neighbours so disagreeable as these mountain banditti. He accordingly made a treaty with the Koordish chiefs; invited them all to a grand entertainment in his camp, and there had the whole of them quietly murdered.

With all his many faults, Abbas was a prudent and enlightened prince, and much devoted to the improvement of his country. He built numbers of caravansaries, bridges, aqueducts, mosques, palaces, schools, and colleges, all over the country; and greatly improved and beautified Ispahan, which city he made his capital. He extended

the commerce of Persia in a great degree; and by suppressing and punishing robbery and violence, extirpating thieves, and giving employment to the people, he brought the country into a perfect state of order and subjection. With the aid of English arms, he regained the island of Ormus from the Portuguese, who were then formidable in the Persian Gulf: and in order to increase the trade and population of his capital, he transplanted colonies of Armenians thither. Never certainly did Persia enjoy such prosperity as it did under his sway.

On the other hand, Abbas was a merciless bloodspiller; and being addicted to hard drinking, the influence of wine on his naturally cruel disposition often produced results so frightful as to be scarcely credible. He murdered his favourite son and heir, in a jealous fit; and afterwards, struck with remorse, poisoned all the courtiers who had prejudiced him against the unfortunate boy. The punishments he inflicted for every trifling or imaginary offence, evince a nature absolutely fiendish; and the truculent barbarities he committed, by way of piquant jests, were often too atrociously disgusting to be mentioned. An Eastern prince cannot be blamed for occasional tyranny. If he would live respected and obeyed by his subjects, he must be sometimes severe and harsh. A mild, humane, and merciful ruler is laughed at and despised by the people, who are ever ready to revolt from his lenient government;

and to keep a fickle, faithless and excitable people in order, as well as to control the turbulence of a set of ambitious and disaffected chiefs and nobles, the absolute monarch cannot avoid the exercise of occasional despotic tyranny. When Sir Robert Shirley once took upon him to remonstrate with Abbas, regarding some piece of cruelty just perpetrated, the Shah coolly replied, "If my subjects were Englishmen, I should probably have no occasion to be so strict with them; but if your King James had these brutes of Persians for his subjects, he would be obliged to treat them as I do."

Unlike his bigoted predecessors, Abbas was perfectly tolerant of all religions. He was partial to Christians, and to Englishmen in particular. Sir Dodmore Cotton, and the brothers Sir Anthony and Sir Robert Shirley, were received by him, and entertained in the kindest manner. His favourite wives were Georgian Christian ladies, whom he seems to have preferred to his own countrywomen. He greatly favoured his Armenian subjects, and often attended at their religious ceremonies in their churches; concluding his visit with a drunken revel, which was too often wound up by a bloody tragedy, by way of an excellent joke. In his foreign policy, he displayed considerable acuteness, but a great want of scruple. He possessed much energy and daring courage, sullied however with an utter abuse of everything like the feelings of humanity.

The latter days of Abbas the Great were darkened by deeds of horrible ferocity. After destroying his eldest son, he blinded his other children. He grew suspicious and distrustful of all of his own household, and the interior of his palace became a scene of frightful carnage.

Abbas was succeeded by his grandson Shah Suffee, a vicious, drunken, sanguinary wretch, who murdered nearly all of his relatives, including his own mother; and died, it is supposed by poison, after a reign of fourteen years. His son, Abbas the Second, next came to the throne. This monarch was brave, liberal and hospitable, but exceedingly dissipated and licentious; and in his drunken fits, displayed a taste for ferocious cruelty, worthy of a descendant of his great namesake. His debaucheries hastened the termination of his life, and he died in his thirty-sixth year; being succeeded by his son Suleimân Shah, who narrowly escaped assassination in the contention for the crown which followed his father's death. Suleimân proved to be a true Suffavean — merciless, capricious, bloody and debauched. He was as great a drunkard as his father — he neglected state affairs, and passed his time in revels; while the Uzbeks and other Tartar tribes continually harassed the kingdom.

On the death of Suleimân in 1694, his son, the weak and imbecile Shah Hosein, was placed on the throne. A bigot and fanatic in religion, unwarlike, superstitious and irresolute, and with

all his piety a drivelling sot, Hosein was quite unfitted to govern a country like Persia. The Affghans, under Meer Vaiz and Mahmoud Gilgee, invaded the kingdom, and took many of the principal towns one after another; while the wretched Shah, completely guided and ruled by a vile conclave of eunuchs and moollahs, made no effort to oppose them, but trusted to the prayers of the pious, to avert the impending danger. At length, Mahmoud advanced upon Ispahan and besieged the city: the blockade was long and severe, and the miserable inhabitants were reduced to the state of hardship and suffering, which the Jews underwent at the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. All supplies being cut off from the city, human flesh was eaten after every other substance, animal and vegetable, that could sustain life, had been consumed.

Finally, Ispahan was starved into a surrender; the victorious Affghans had gained possession of the whole realm of Persia, and Hosein was compelled to resign his crown, and do homage to the haughty Mahmoud. The people of Persia were fated to endure great cruelty, at the hands of the Affghan invaders. Mahmoud, after butchering nearly every individual of the royal family, with great numbers of persons belonging to all the chief families of Persia, himself went mad, and was privately put to death by his own relatives. Ashraff, a cousin of Mahmoud, succeeded as chief of the Affghans and sovereign of Persia;

but the power of these intruders, soon after, met with an unexpected overthrow.

Nadir Koollee, the Napoleon of Persia, was of humble origin, his father being a petty chief of the Affshar tribe in Khorassan. He was originally, it is said, a shepherd and a robber; but having entered the Persian army, he soon displayed extraordinary courage and military talents, particularly in a hazardous campaign against the Uzbeks, which led to his being appointed a *been-báshee* or colonel *, when scarcely thirty years of age. Nadir assisted Tahmasp, the son of Shah Hosein, in exciting an insurrection against the Affghans, and, with some little difficulty, they got together a force of 25,000 men. With this army, Nadir defeated Ashraff in several battles, evincing such military ability and heroism, that Tahmasp, who now regained the throne of his ancestors and assumed the title of Shah, made him general of his entire army. Ashraff fled from Ispahan, having first wantonly put to death the miserable Shah Hosein, who, for some years, had been living as a prisoner at large. Nadir pursued him, and after a series of bloody engagements, fairly succeeded in driving the Affghans out of the country.

Shah Tahmasp, being now securely settled in his kingdom, paid his victorious general the compliment of conferring on him his own name —

* *Been-báshee* or *Meen-báshee* signifies "commander of a thousand." The title is Turkish.

the greatest honour the king can show to a subject — and Nadir Koollee took the appellation of Tahmasp Koollee Khan. A boundless ambition appears now to have become the general's ruling passion. Shah Tahmasp was a weak, inactive sovereign, addicted to intemperance, which seems to have been the pet vice of his family; and ere long, the general found no great difficulty in persuading the army, which was devoted to him, that their king was a worthless puppet, and that he himself would make a better ruler. It was accordingly proposed, first privately and then openly, that the last of the Suffavean race should be deposed, and (his only son and heir being dead) that the general should be elevated to the throne, in his stead. The experiment was a hazardous one, but the general well knew how he could depend on his troops, who all but worshipped him; and doubtless thought with the ill-fated Montrose:—

> "He either fears his fate too much,
> Or his deserts are small,
> Who dares not put it to the touch
> To gain or lose it all."

The whole army was in favour of this measure, but the moollah-hood violently opposed it. The ambitious general, however, soon silenced their clamours, by laying hold of the Sheikh-ul-islâm, or chief of this sanctified body, and beheading him on the spot without further ceremony: after which, he was elected king, and

ascended the throne on the 14th of March, 1736, with the title of Nadir Shah.

Thus ended the rule of the long line of the house of Suffee; and in spite of the little that can be said in favour of these princes, as improvers of their country and patrons of literature and learning, it must be admitted that a more inhuman, profligate, and bloody race of despots never disgraced a throne.

The first act of the new monarch was to summon the men of law and religion from all quarters of his kingdom; and these he treated in a way calculated to astonish them not a little. Hitherto their power had been paramount (as indeed it has been ever since Nadir's days), and the Shah himself had never dared openly to oppose them. Nadir however, like Buonaparte, had an immense army at his beck and nod: the soldiers were devoted to him, and he had nothing to fear from any unarmed and undisciplined populace. He dealt with the conclave of pious men, much in the same style as Napoleon did with Pope Pius VII. and his cardinals; or as did Peter the Great with his clergy, when he constituted himself Patriarch of the church, without their suffrage or consent.

Nadir rebuked the synod of holy drones, for their indolence, luxury, hypocrisy, and general and particular uselessness; concluding his unwelcome harangue by informing them that the greater part of their revenues and fat livings were confis-

cated to the uses of his soldiery. He next endeavoured to persuade his subjects at large to renounce the Sheeah faith and embrace the Soonnee creed. The attempt was, of course, unsuccessful; but the object of Nadir evidently was, to conciliate thereby the neighbouring Moslem nations, who were Soonnees, and in time to make himself master of them all. An advantageous peace was concluded with the Sooltân of Turkey — the provinces which the Turks had wrested from Persia, were restored — and the empire of Eerân recovered its former power and importance. The great success attending Nadir's measures, may be attributed to the care and interest he took in his soldiers, who were all well disciplined, paid, fed, and clothed, under his own direct supervision. He delighted in his army, and the troops looked up to him with corresponding confidence and affection.

Nadir Shah's person has thus been described by an English gentleman, who had frequent interviews with him, previous to his invasion of India: —

" Nadir Shah is about fifty-five years, upwards " of six foot high, well-proportioned, of a very " robust make and constitution; his complexion " sanguine, and inclined to be fat, but the fatigue " he undergoes prevents it: he has fine large " black eyes and eyebrows, and in short, is one " of the most comely men I ever beheld. The " injury the sun and weather have done to his

" complexion, only gives him a more manly " aspect. His voice is so uncommonly loud and " strong, that he frequently, without straining it, " gives orders to his people at above a hundred " yards' distance."

After a short interval of peace, Nadir's insatiable love of conquest impelled him again to take the field. He attacked his old enemies the Affghans, subdued Candahar and Bokhara, and then invaded India, under pretence of avenging some real or imaginary insult. Mahommed, emperor of Hindostan, made a feeble show of resistance, and Nadir defeated him signally at the battle of Karnaul. Indeed, this battle seems to have been little else than a complete rout and slaughter of the Indian emperor's weak and disorganized army.

Nadir's loss was very trifling, compared with that of his effeminate opponents. He speedily took and sacked Delhi, massacred the inhabitants, and returned to his own dominions, laden with an immense quantity of treasure and spoil. While returning through Khorassan, an attempt was made on his life; which act of treachery he attributed to his own son Reza Koollee Mirza, a high-spirited ambitious youth, whom he accordingly caused to be blinded. Nadir, always sanguinary and cruel, now became morose, suspicious, and tyrannical, to an insupportable degree. His mind was undoubtedly deranged, and his evil passions worked up into a frenzy. Numbers of his chosen

followers and former friends were put to death, without any reason assigned, whole cities were depopulated, and thousands of unhappy people butchered in cold blood. Nadir daily perpetrated the most diabolical cruelties—he was tortured by insane fears and jealousies, such as beset Robespierre at the close of his bloody career—and at length, being madly suspicious of all his former companions, he determined on putting to death most of the officers in his army. This led to his own destruction: he was assassinated in his tent, by three of his officers, June 8th, 1747, and the entire fabric of his power crumbled at once to pieces.

The "Life of Nadir Shah," written by his private secretary Mirza Mehdee, is one of the best pieces of Persian biography I have ever perused. The author accompanied his sanguinary master in many of his campaigns, and was eye-witness to much that he describes. It is however to be regretted that a sensible and intelligent writer, as the Mirza evidently is, should condescend to flatter the prevailing vitiated taste, by introducing such overwhelming quantities of flowery hyperbole and senseless verbiage. His account of the battle of Karnaul, for example, is a piece of bombast and fustian that would scarce befit the tragedy of Tom Thumb; though perhaps not much more absurd than the rhodomontade in which Major-General Sir William Napier occasionally indulges. He draws a fearful picture of

the condition of the country, about the close of Nadir's career, which, though extravagant and turgidly written, is doubtless only too true; and in reference to the murder of the Shah, he says that his slayers—"made that ambitious head, which in its comprehensive schemes of dominion, the world could scarce contain, a ball for children to play with in the camp." *

This work was translated into French, by Sir William Jones, at the request of the King of Denmark; and we are informed that his version obtained the applause of the learned of Europe. I wonder how many of these savans ever took the trouble, or had the opportunity, of comparing it with the original; for had they done so, I incline to think they might have been more sparing of their commendation. My own private opinion of the performance is in no way favourable, but I respect the memory of Sir William

* The Mirza concludes his reflections on his tyrant master's murder with the following significant verses—

سرشب سرقتل و تاراج داشت
سحرگه نه تن سر نه سرتاج داشت
بیک گردش چرخ نیلوفری
نه نادر بجا ماند نه نادری

"At nightfall, he was plotting schemes of ruthless slaughter and pillage,
"By daybreak, his head was without a crown, and his body without a head,
"In a single revolution of the azure vault of heaven
"Nadir and his empire had vanished together."

Jones, and should be sorry to attempt any hyper-critical censure on anything he has executed. There is a good deal that may be found fault with, in many of his versions from Eastern lore, now-a-days, when these matters are better understood; but considering the very slender means available in his time, and the immense difficulties he had to contend with, it is really wonderful that he succeeded as well as he did. His fame as an Oriental scholar is above all disparagement.

The anecdotes related of Nadir Shah are beyond computation. I may be permitted to repeat one or two, which were lately told me by one whose grandsire had been a soldier in Nadir's army, and had witnessed the sack and massacre of Delhi. When Nadir invaded India, he arrived first at Lahore, where the governor immediately surrendered the city to him, and treated him with princely honours. At night, Nadir, whose only couch, for months past, had been a horse-blanket, with a saddle for a pillow, was conducted to a magnificent bed, with piles of cushions; and twelve young damsels were in attendance to shampoo his limbs and fan him to sleep. Nadir started from his luxurious couch, roared for his secretary, and gave orders that the drums should be beat and a proclamation made, that Nadir had conquered all India. The astonished scribe ventured to hint that this conquest had not yet been accomplished. "No matter," said Nadir, "where the chiefs of the people choose to live in this

effeminate manner, it will cost me little trouble to conquer them." And his anticipation was fully verified.

After he had taken the city of Delhi, he visited the discomfitted emperor, who received him in fear and trembling. Nadir was seated in the chair of state, and the otto of roses and other perfumes brought, according to custom, and presented to him. Nadir had not changed his clothes or taken off his armour for many a day, and his person was by no means free from vermin. He asked contemptuously what was the use of perfuming a soldier's garments, and thrusting his hand into his bosom, drew forth a number of lice, which he told the astonished emperor were better companions than all his sweet scents!

A very common salutation to a friend, whom one has not seen for some time, is to welcome him and assure him "that his place has long been empty." Nadir had ordered a splendid mausoleum to be built for himself at Mush,hed in Khorassan; and on his return from India, he went to see it. The night before he visited his intended resting-place, some unfriendly wag wrote above the spot destined for the grave — "Welcome, conqueror of the world! your place here has long been empty." Nadir offered a reward for the discovery of the writer; but whoever he was, he took good care to keep incognito. The place was not long empty; for Nadir was assassinated soon after; and here his remains rested till they

were dug up and desecrated by Agha Mahommed.

Nadir was anxious to create a naval power for Persia; and with this intent, he had some vessels purchased for him at the Indian ports, to navigate the Gulf; while he employed an Englishman, named Elton, to build ships on the south coast of the Caspian. Elton was murdered soon after Nadir's death.

The army of Nadir Shah was a heterogeneous assemblage of men of different nations and tribes; but by dint of strict discipline, and keeping them constantly employed, he maintained good order among them. He neglected nothing, however trifling; rewarded liberally and punished severely. He was a thorough soldier, and a right brave one. Bold, ferocious, and cunning; he lived in disturbed times, and well knew how to turn all to his own advantage. Gifted with an iron frame and great capacity, he was destitute of pity, as of fear. He laughed at all the superstitions and similar absurdities believed in by his own countrymen; and held religion itself in little, if any, higher esteem.

After Nadir's death, his descendants and various other chiefs, including one scion of the Suffee family, disputed for the crown, with the usual amount of bloodshed — all actuated by

> "The sacred hunger of ambitious minds
> And impotent desire of men to reign."

At length, most of the principal actors in this tragedy being cut off by mutual assassination, the sovereignty was conferred on Kureem Khan, a chief of the Zend family, an Eeliautee tribe; who reigned over Persia for nearly thirty years. He met, at first, with much opposition, threatening the stability of his rule; but this he succeeded in putting down with firmness and resolution, tempered by mercy and generosity. Of all the long list of Persian kings, the name of Kureem Khan alone deserves to be remembered as the father and cherisher of his people — as a lover of justice and humanity—and a stranger to wanton cruelty and oppression. He was strict and decided in his character; and with all his love of clemency, could punish severely when necessary: indeed, had he not acted thus, instead of being remembered as a just and excellent monarch, his memory would be scouted at for an imbecile idiot.

Kureem Khan was himself illiterate, but he valued learning in others, and endeavoured to promote it by every means. To counterbalance a want of education, he was possessed of a sound judgment, great prudence and sagacity, and a naturally amiable disposition. In his youth he had been, like other Eeliautees, a robber, as he himself admitted; for he confessed to having lost his front teeth by the kick of a donkey, which he was stealing from a stable: and he had likewise been, for some time, a private soldier in Nadir

Shah's army. He never assumed the title of Shah, but always called himself *vakeel* or "deputy." He made Sheerauz his capital, and embellished that city with numerous fine buildings, some of which exist; though a great part was wantonly destroyed by his brutal successor.

Kureem Khan died in 1779, leaving behind him a reputation for humanity, justice and moderation, such as few Asiatic princes have deserved. The Persians, as well as other Moslem nations, have a fanciful method of expressing the dates of celebrated events and any remarkable occurrences, by means of a sentence, the numerical values of the letters composing which, being added up, give the date. Each of the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet possesses a certain numerical value; and it rests with the ingenuity of the chronicler, to combine a number of these in a short sentence, indicating the time of the event to which it bears reference. The death of the worthy Kureem Khan Zend is commemorated in the sentence —

اي واي كريم خان مرد

Ei vâ,e kureem khân moord.

"Woe and alas! Kureem Khan is dead."

The numeral values of the letters composing these few words, being added up, give 1193, the year of the Hijra, corresponding with A. D. 1779, in which this good king died. The fate of the

sanguinary Nadir has been recorded (doubtless by some moollah) in less complimentary phrase —

نا در بدرک رفت

Nâdir bidarrak raft.

"Nadir is gone to the abyss of hell."

These letters give 1161, the year of the Hijra which corresponds with A. D. 1747, in which Nadir was put to death.

On the demise of Kureem Khan, the country once more fell into a state of anarchy and confusion. Besides members of the Zend family, there were, on this occasion, many competitors for the crown. The four sons of Kureem Khan, and many more of his relatives, perished in the struggle; and after some years of strife, bloodshed and civil war, the contest lay between Lootf Alee Khan, grandnephew and sole surviving heir to the late king, and Agha Mahommed Khan, a chief of the ambitious Kajar tribe; several of which family had, for years past, had an eye towards the sovereignty. Agha Mahommed had, in his youth, been barbarously mutilated by order of Nadir Shah, who doubtless thought that by this proceeding, he would effectually prevent the chance of any scion of the powerful Kajar chief contesting the crown with any of his own descendants; little dreaming that the injured boy was destined to sit in his own seat, and rival him in deeds of cruelty and blood. During Kureem's

reign, Agha Mahommed had been detained under strict surveillance, as a dangerous and suspicious character — any less merciful monarch would have put him to death without further ceremony.

Lootf Alee Khan, the son of Jaafer Khan, a nephew of the late *vakeel*, is the most interesting character in the annals of modern Persia. He was one of the handsomest men of his age, and unrivalled in feats of horsemanship and martial exercises; while his graceful bearing, gallant conduct, and noble qualities, endeared him to all who knew him. He was scarcely twenty years of age when summoned to defend his rights against his formidable antagonist. He gained possession of Sheerauz and southern Persia, while Agha Mahommed held the north of the kingdom. The contest was protracted for nearly six years, and after various vicissitudes of fortune, on either side, the scale of success eventually turned in favour of the usurping Kajar, through the treachery of the favoured adviser and confidant of the unfortunate Lootf Alee. Hâjee Ibrahim, a man of respectable family in Sheerauz, had been raised to the government of that city by Jaafer Khan, and was apparently devoted to the interests of his benefactor's son. From various circumstances, Lootf Alee had at length reason to suspect his fidelity; and finding himself distrusted, Hâjee Ibrahim resolved to espouse openly the cause of the stronger party. He accordingly delivered up the city of Sheerauz to the

Kajar faction, and disarmed and imprisoned such friends of the rightful prince as he could lay hold of.

Lootf Alee Khan soon found himself deserted by his army, and reduced to the greatest straits: still he did not despair, but having been joined by a few friends who had escaped from Sheerauz, he levied a small force with great difficulty, and marched against Sheerauz, in order to retake that stronghold, if possible; but was compelled to retreat without effecting his purpose. He next journeyed into Khorassan, and having got together a band of Affghans, Turkomans and Eeliauts, proceeded against the city of Kerman, which he took, and concentrating all his forces there, resolved upon making one more bold attempt to regain his crown. Agha Mahommed now besieged Kerman, which, after a desperate resistance, he took by storm — the people of that devoted city were slaughtered indiscriminately — and Lootf Alee, wounded and made prisoner, fell into the hands of his mortal foe. The usurper caused him to be blinded, and afterwards treated with the most horrible indignities, such as can hardly be conceived, and are by no means fit to be mentioned.* He was soon after relieved from his miseries by death.

* An old man whom I met with at Sheerauz, who had served under Lootf Alee Khan in his youth, informed me of this. He had been an eye-witness of the dreadful treatment, to which his unhappy master was subjected.

Sir John Malcolm has attempted to palliate, if not to excuse, the conduct of Hâjee Ibrahim; but no sophistry or argument can defend the abominable ingratitude and treachery of which he was guilty. The traitor eventually received the reward which his perfidy merited; for it is satisfactory to know that he was destroyed by the very family which he had been instrumental in raising to the regal power. The late Fat,h Alee Shah, for reasons which I have never heard explained rightly, ordered his eyes to be extracted and his tongue cut out; and soon after this, he was put to death with his whole family, except one infant son, as I have previously mentioned in a former part of my journal. I have heard that he was boiled in a huge cauldron — a mode of execution not altogether uncommon in this humane and enlightened country!

Agha Mahommed having destroyed his rival, was acknowledged Shah of Persia in 1794 *; and a more merciless, inhuman, and avaricious ruler, than this cross-grained eunuch, never ascended a throne. Like many tyrants, in other ages and climes, he professed great zeal for religion, and commonly affected the *fakeer* or ascetic. He was nevertheless indulgent and liberal to his army, relying on the fidelity of his troops for his own safety. He was, of course, jealous of his own brothers; one of whom he treacherously mur-

* He did not assume the title of Shah till publicly crowned in 1796, a year before his death.

dered, and deprived another of sight. He made Tehrân his capital, and destroyed many of the fine buildings at Sheerauz, which Kureem Khan had erected. The tombs of Kureem Khan and Nadir Shah were broken down by his orders: the remains of the former monarch were burnt to ashes, while the bones of Nadir were conveyed to Tehrân, and buried under the doorway of the palace, that he might daily have the satisfaction of treading over the dust of his former oppressor. The acts of this king involve a long list of butcheries and cruelties, which it would be irksome to recount. He was, at length, assassinated by his own servants, while encamped near the town of Sheesha in Karabagh, in 1797.* I may well be spared the task of repeating any of the many anecdotes told of the sanguinary acts of Agha Mahommed, but I should observe that he has had deeds fathered upon him by popular rumour, which have been attributed to other princes before his time: for instance — the story of his ripping open the stomach of a soldier, whom a woman had accused of drinking a pennyworth of milk unpaid for — is one of these tales told of many an Eastern king. The story is, at least, as old as Sir John Froissart's days; for he relates it of his own cotemporary the Ottoman emperor Bajazet.† The career of Agha Ma-

* The character of Agha Mahommed is admirably drawn in Morier's novel of Zohrab the Hostage.

† Bâyazeed, whom we call Bajazet, was fourth emperor of

hommed was sufficiently sanguinary, without the aid of fiction or exaggeration. He lived truculent, unsparing, and keenly suspicious of all around him — not without good cause —

> "For he, that steeps his safety in true blood,
> Shall find but bloody safety and untrue."

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the Turks, and great grandson of Othman the founder of that empire. From his activity in warfare, he was named Ilderim or Yelderm, signifying "lightning." He opposed Teimour Lung; who, in 1402, defeated him at Angora, took him prisoner, and (according to report) confined him in an iron cage. He died soon after.

CHAP. XXXI.

Sketch of Persian History continued.—Present Condition of the Country.—State of the Shah's Army.—Persian Commerce.—Poverty and Prostration of the Land.—Insidious Designs of Russia.

AGHA Mahommed was succeeded by his nephew Fat,h Alee, whose father, his own brother, he had murdered in a fit of suspicious jealousy. Fat,h Alee Shah was about forty years old, when he came to the throne; he reigned nearly thirty-eight years, and died in October 1834.

During his long reign, the country was comparatively quiet and peaceful, excepting an occasional outbreak with Russia. The Shah was in no way ambitious, and hated warfare—like Bardolph, "his mind was not heroic, and there's the humour of it"—and he was well disposed to leave his neighbours alone, on condition of mutual forbearance.

Fat,h Alee, though guilty of occasional acts of cruelty, was a humane and merciful ruler, in comparison with most Persian kings; and if through his weakness of character, and niggardly

parsimony, he did little good to his country and people, he at all events, did not sacrifice the lives of his subjects, in any wild schemes of ambition and conquest; nor did he treat any of his people with more severity than was perhaps occasionally necessary. He took no pleasure in executions and tortures, and never had such performed save when deemed expedient.

The greatest defect in the character of this monarch, was his excessive avarice, and insatiable greediness of gain — a true Kajar failing, by the way — which often led to acts of sordid meanness, that are hardly credible. Great rapacity and shabby covetousness are, however, as I have already observed, far too universal among all ranks in this country, to be considered any disgrace. Fat,h Alee Shah was wont to dispose of his own daughters, and even of his wives when he got tired of them, to wealthy individuals, for large sums of money — no matter whether the person was ambitious of the doubtful honour, or otherwise — and no matter whether his family was noble or base; or his own character and reputation good or bad — if he happened to be rich, the dignity was thrust upon him "volens nolens," and pay for it handsomely he must. On one or two occasions, when Persia was threatened with a famine from failure of rain, this patriotic and fatherly sovereign bought up, on his own account, all the stores of grain, deposited in the towns throughout his dominions, and retailed the pro-

vender to his starving subjects at a ruinous price, turning thereby a very pretty penny. Another ingenious expedient for "raising the wind" happily hit on, and constantly practised with great success by this high-minded monarch, was to make bets and gamble for large stakes, with his nobles and courtiers (utterly disregarding the inhibitions of the prophet with reference to this practice), and, as a matter of course, invariably winning. Some of his rapacious contrivances were not devoid of humour — for example, the trick he played his own representative, on his return from an embassy to England—an artifice, by which, every one will allow, the crafty ambassador richly deserved to suffer. Mirza Abul Hasan Khan visited Britain for the last time in 1819, in the capacity of envoy; and on his return to Persia, brought with him, certain presents for the Shah, together with a large assortment of articles of furniture, plate, china, glass, and other "notions" belonging to himself. The expense of carriage of all these things, as far as Tehrân, would doubtless be considerable; but as the Shah's presents were to be forwarded gratis by the authorities from town to town, the Mirza bethought him of an expedient to save his own pocket; and accordingly transmitted all his own articles at the same time, pretending that the whole consisted of gifts for the sovereign. Before the caravan reached the capital, the Shah had somehow got wind of this proceeding: he said

nothing; but when the goods arrived in Tehrân, he coolly directed the whole to be conveyed to the palace, and appropriated the entire amount to himself!

Some of the acts of Fat,h Alee Shah were, however, of a darker and more melancholy nature; fully exemplifying the warning, "Put not your trust in princes." After his accession to the throne, a powerful chief of a rival tribe, named Sâdek Khan *, who had been one of the aspirants to the regal dignity, finding his cause hopeless, resolved to throw himself on the new king's mercy and generosity. Fat,h Alee appeared willing to come to conciliatory terms with him, and swore solemnly on the Koran, that if he would surrender himself, his blood should not be shed. Sâdek Khan accordingly delivered himself up; but only to find that the Shah could equivocate with his pledged word, in a way similar to Macbeth's supernatural tempters —

> "That palter with us in a double sense,
> That keep the word of promise to our ear,
> And break it to our hope."

The unhappy man was confined in a small room, the door and windows of which were bricked up, and he was starved to death — his blood was not shed!

* Mr. Baillie Fraser has represented Sâdek Khan to have been an uncle of the Shah; but this, I think, must be a mistake. He was of the Shekâki family, and could not, I conceive, ave been in any way connected with the Kajars.

Another sad blot on his character, is his cruel treatment of Hâjee Ibrahim, his uncle's favourite minister and his own. Traitor and villain, as this ill-starred man had proved, to the family which had raised him to eminence, he was at least one to whom the Kajars owed a heavy debt of gratitude. What cause may have led to his destruction, is not known — publicly at least — but it is said that Fat,h Alee Shah afterwards repented heartily of his cruelty and rashness. The Hâjee Kowâm of Sheerauz, as I before mentioned, is the only surviving member of the family of Hâjee Ibrahim. I have heard that when the Shah once visited Sheerauz, and all the public officers, including this man (who was then *kelauntar* or mayor of the city), went to receive him with due honours, his Majesty was pleased to express his approbation of the conduct of the *kelauntar*, and to signify his intention of befriending him: whereupon the son of Hâjee Ibrahim had the temerity to address the Shah in the following couplet: —

پدر کشتي و تخم کين کاشتي
پدر کشته را کي بود آشتي

"Thou didst destroy my father, and hast sowed the seeds of mortal enmity. When can one, whose father has been murdered, ever be friends with his slayer?"

Among a poetical people like the Persians, responses in verse are not uncommonly made;

and a clever impromptu has often served to plead a man's cause effectually: but such a verse as this might have been expected to cost the *ke-launtar* his life, or his eyes at least. The Shah, however, was probably smitten with remorse for his cruel ingratitude towards his old friend: he turned away his head, and took no notice of the affront.

Fat,h Alee Shah was an eminently handsome man. His tribe has always been conspicuous for good looks; and he was a fine specimen of the Kajar race. His beard was considered the finest in his dominions, where a long and ample beard is reckoned the most becoming ornament a man can possess.

He possessed one of the largest families on record, in ancient or modern times. Besides the four *akdee* or lawful wives permitted to every Mussulman, he had more than 800 *mutea* or inferior spouses. He was continually changing his women, as he tired of them and lacked novelty; but I believe he never parted with any who had borne him male children. He had upwards of one hundred and thirty sons; and one hundred and sixty or seventy daughters.* At the time of his decease, the number of his descendants (children, grandchildren and great-

* Augustus XI. of Poland is said to have had 354 children by his numerous concubines. This beats the Persian king. He also had one of his own daughters for his mistress, a piece of depravity which Fat,h Alee Shah has never been accused of.

grandchildren included) amounted to about five thousand souls! These *shahzâdehs* were, and in a great degree are still, a heavy burthen to the country. There is scarcely a village of any size, in Persia, that has not some prince resident at it, to oppress and impoverish the people, while he devotes his time and energies to all manner of mischief and profligacy. They are not now as much regarded and feared, as formerly. Some of them are comparatively well off, but many now exist in great poverty. There are some descendants of Fat,h Alee Shah, at this moment, earning their living as mechanics and tradesmen in the different cities.

In the extensive *zenâna* of Fat,h Alee Shah, the greatest depravity existed. The crimes of Amnon and Absalom were perpetrated by many of his numerous sons; and not a few of his multifarious ladies died by poison administered by their rivals in the royal favour.

Fat,h Alee Shah had named his favourite son Abbas Mirza, as his successor; and prevailed on his ministers and nobles to acknowledge him as such: hoping in this way to secure the crown, at his own decease, to his chosen son; and prevent the dreadful strife, otherwise likely to ensue among his many children. Abbas Mirza predeceased his father by a short time, and it was settled that the crown should descend in his line.

Mahommed Shah, the eldest son of Abbas

Mirza, met with considerable opposition from such of his affectionate uncles and cousins as could collect together some rabblement of an army, and make a push for the tempting bauble of royalty. He gained his throne, from his many competing relatives, mainly by the aid of English officers and English money; and after a little unavoidable severity and bloodshed, he was securely seated in his capital. He evinced but little gratitude for the help he had obtained from the British; for within two years after his accession, he intrigued with Russia against us. In this underhand proceeding, the Shah was probably pursuing no designs of his own, but was entirely guided and directed by his wily prime minister.

He conceived that he had a right to the sovereignty of Candahar and Herat, as these had once belonged to Persia; and entered into a treaty with our Affghan foe Dost Mahommed, who promised to assist him. He thereupon dispatched an army to Herat, in 1837, to overthrow Shah Kamrân. This force, after loitering about the place for nine months, and occasionally attempting a siege, retreated in a very mean and disgraceful manner. At that time, an expedition was sent from Bombay up the Gulf, and the island of Carrack was taken possession of; which sufficed to bring the Shah to his senses, showing him how easily troops could be landed at Bushire, in the event of any quarrel with Britain.

Mahommed Shah was possessed with some in-

sane ambition to be a great warrior and conqueror; for which he was utterly unfitted. In the East, a warlike monarch is always expected to lead his own armies in person: while the Shah was a continual invalid, and such a martyr to gout that he could rarely even mount a horse. He was a man of some talent and information, but not much energy. He was too great a gourmand to be careful of his health; but he drank no wine, and (unlike most of his clan) was little addicted to the fair sex, for he had only two wives. He gave himself little trouble about state affairs, which were managed, almost entirely, by his prime minister Hâjee Mirza Aghassee, who had formerly been his tutor, and who succeeded to the premiership soon after the Shah's accession to the throne, when the former minister was put to death, as I have already mentioned.

Hâjee Mirza Aghassee was a strange character, generally supposed to be half-crazy; but there is little doubt that he was more knave than fool. He studied eccentricity; being very whimsical in his habits and manners, and coarse in his language; but he possessed great influence over the Shah, and transacted the business of state as he pleased. He was greatly attached to Russian interests, which he befriended as much as possible, and detested the English while he flattered them to their faces. He was very avaricious; and in the course of his ministration, by no means neg-

lected his own advantage. As may be supposed, he had many enemies; and after the Shah's death, he was obliged to flee for his life. He made his escape to Kerbela, where he died lately. One commendable trait in his character deserves to be noticed. He was averse to bloodshed, and reluctant to put any one to death: and often interceded successfully in behalf of persons condemned by the Shah, who was fond of executions, being naturally cruel and prone to severity.

Mahommed Shah died, rather suddenly, on the 6th of September 1848, in the forty-seventh year of his age, and thirteenth of his reign; and was succeeded by the elder of his two sons, Nâsir-ud-deen Mirza, a youth of eighteen, who was immediately proclaimed Shah at Tehrân, and recognized as such by all the foreign ministers and consuls, as well as by the Persian officials. This prompt recognition of his rights and titles, at once neutralized any chance of opposition; and Nâsir-ud-deen Shah actually came to the throne, without being obliged to wade thither through the blood of his brethren and relatives — a fact quite unprecedented in the annals of Persia.

Until very lately, the young Shah was little else than a nonentity, as far as regarded affairs of state, public and private; but he has now begun to interest himself in these matters. He is, of course, guided by the counsels of his Prime Minister, the Ameer, and it is said that his mother has much influence over him. This lady, who

by all accounts is a thorough Messalina, was formerly at variance with the Ameer, but they have now found it advantageous to be friends.

The Ameer, Mirza Takee, is of low origin: his father was a cook, and I have heard that he himself was, in his youth, a *pehlaván*, or public wrestler; a report in no way belied by his large athletic frame. He is unquestionably an able and clever man; but has many faults common to any half-educated, ill-formed Persian. Ignorant of the world at large, and knowing but little of the condition and powers of other nations, such a minister must necessarily be too often short-sighted and erring in his policy. He is said to be occasionally harsh and cruel; and by no means free from the most prominent vices of his countrymen. His brother, who is *vazeeri nezám* or minister of war, is a savage and inhuman brute, universally and deservedly detested. Mirza Takee is married to a sister of the Shah, and this alliance will probably maintain and strengthen him in the, always precarious, position of counsellor to a capricious self-willed despot. With all his defects, it might be no easy matter to find any one of his countrymen better qualified to fill the situation.

As I have remarked before now, the Koranic law of inheritance does not admit the privilege of primogeniture, and no special provision is made for royal succession. The nobility of the mother

usually decides the heir *, unless the king has nominated his successor: but every son considers that he has an equal right; and hence the scenes of strife and slaughter that ensue. The sons of a king are, consequently, all deadly enemies of each other; hating, fearing, and plotting against one another, from the cradle. The death of their father is the prelude to a bloody tragedy; brothers are butchered, maimed and blinded, without compunction, until the most fortunate fratricide succeeds in gaining the throne. This unnatural hatred and jealousy among brethren exists, in a greater or less degree, in every great man's family; and, as may be supposed, rival wives encourage it to the highest pitch among their respective children.

Absolute and despotic authority is too potent and dangerous an instrument to be placed in the hands of a weak mortal; and he must be a wise and virtuous man indeed, who does not occasionally abuse the power. The Persians, however, acknowledge themselves to be *zoolm-perest* (worshippers of tyranny); a humane and merciful ruler is despised among them, and in their admiration of despotism they are accustomed to look coolly on things, which, in civilized countries, would fill every one with horror. Asiatic princes

* There cannot be said to be any Queen in Persia. The ladies of the royal harem are simply called the Shah's wives, and any of them may be in favour one day, and divorced the next.

are, at best, but bad specimens of humanity; and with all their uncontrolled power and luxury, must often be very miserable beings. Their education is calculated to destroy all energy of body and mind, and damp every generous and kindly feeling. Being permitted to have their own way, from their earliest youth, they become selfish, unreasonable, and profligate; and so far is it from being extraordinary, that so many of them turn out badly in after life, it is strange that any of them should turn out well. Most of the renowned men of the East have been individuals of humble origin, or broken fortune, who have struggled with poverty, hardships and dangers, in their early career.

The Persians have, in all ages, been notorious for cruelty: so much so, that their annals, ancient and modern, are more like a history of fiends than of mortal men. I am happy to say, however, that the frightful modes of punishing criminals, formerly put in practice "ad libitum," are now discouraged by the present Shah; and all Persian authorities must perforce follow his example. Death is usually inflicted by simple decapitation — except when a more severe example is considered necessary — and the, once very common, punishment, of putting out the eyes, is now comparatively rare. The bastinado, or beating on the soles of the feet, is a minor chastisement, which every man (the Shah alone excepted) may undergo at any time. Since the

accession of Fat,h Alee Shah to the throne, cruelty has declined. That monarch took no pleasure in brutalities, although some examples he made were sufficiently severe.*

Men's sentiments with regard to cruelty must vary in every society. In semi-barbarous and ill-regulated nations, instances of severity will be much more frequent, and less regarded as cruel, than in civilized and well organized countries. A few centuries ago, the most dreadful cruelties and bloody massacres were perpetrated, not only in Britain, but all over, now enlightened, Europe, without hindrance or remorse; nor could such be prevented by the sovereign of the country; as any attempt to punish or control a chief or noble, was sure to produce disaffection, and not unusually a civil war. It is not impossible that in a few years hence, cruel punishments, and such like barbarities, may be as little practised or known in Persia, as in Europe; for while we regard with horror, the shocking passages with which their history abounds, we must remember that our own records of former days, are sullied with a nearly equal amount of terrible details. The chronicles of my own native land present

* About 1820, Mahommed Zemân Khan, governor of Asterabâd, rebelled against Fat,h Alee Shah. When made prisoner, his eyes were first torn out, and his teeth afterwards extracted one by one, and hammered, like nails, through the crown of his head. The late Mahommed Shah treated an obnoxious *lootee-bâshee* in precisely the same manner.

scenes of blood and brutality, quite as disgusting as any to be met with in Persian history.*

I have frequently been surprised at the great license of speech, which all classes of Persians allow themselves, when speaking of the conduct and characters of their princes and rulers. They often abuse them heartily without scruple, and seemingly without caring who overhears them.

In all other Mahomedan countries I have visited, the people are far more cautious and circumspect in expressing their opinions; and rarely, if ever, venture to speak ill of a great man, unless privately, and in the company of persons whom they can trust.

Fat,h Alee Shah generally had three or four *vazeers* whom he used to consult on the affairs of the nation; but the present king, like his father, is guided by his premier alone. Every large province in the empire is governed by a *hâkim*, who resides chiefly at the principal city in that province, and is the Shah's deputy. The *hâkim* has a *vazeer* to assist him, and when he happens to be a prince, as is generally the case, he has also a *beglerbegee* (chief noble) to aid him in the discharge of his duties. Large towns have a *kelauntar* (mayor) and a *daroogha* (head of

* The account given by old Sir James Balfour of the execution of the murderers of James I. of Scotland, might have imparted a lesson in cruelty to Shah Abbas himself. This horrible act of retributive justice occurred in 1437. French history also affords a few tolerable samples of the ingenuity of the devil working in man to this end.

police) to manage municipal affairs, and every parish in the town has a *kedkhoda* to superintend it. Villages all have their *kedkhoda;* and to each *bulook* (a number of contiguous villages) there is appointed a *zâbit*, whose authority is similar to that of the *hâkim*, but of course inferior. The *mustowfee* is a fiscal officer under the orders of the *hâkim.*

Public men in every official capacity are exceedingly corrupt and rapacious. As Mr. Baillie Fraser remarks, "Every one lives for himself, and snatches what he can." They make dissimulation, flattery and intrigue, their study, and are obliged to do so, from the conduct displayed by their superiors, which renders craft and treachery absolutely necessary. They are commonly very obsequious to their superiors, courteous to their equals, and overbearing and bullying towards their inferiors. In all their transactions, deceit and cunning are called into play to the furthest extent; and the most abominably fraudulent tricks are regarded as perfectly lawful means of effecting any object in view.* Such a

* No honest and upright man could hold a situation long under the Persian government. His conduct would be a constant reproof to his superiors and equals; and he would interfere with the universal system of peculation and tyranny everywhere carried on. In British India, it is to be feared, something very much akin to this abuse, does generally obtain; although with this material difference, that the government neither participates in, nor countenances, a system of delin-

thing as public disgrace is quite unknown in this country: men care not whether their nefarious deeds are known to the public or not, as long as they have proved successful; and no one is thought the worse of for having undergone the most degrading punishments. Lord Bacon has recommended habitual secrecy, seasonable dissimulation, and a power to feign when requisite. I will not praise his lordship's morality; but it would suit Persians admirably.

There exists no such thing as patriotism among Persian officials: no one acts on a principle of duty, or entertains any attachment to the sovereign or government he serves; but looks only to his own individual advantage; and as a natural consequence, they have not the slightest confidence in one another. For such a government, the people at large can have little respect or

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quency, which nevertheless, it has been hitherto unable to prevent. An honest native public servant — that is, one who will not co-operate with his fellows, in their universal schemes of bribery and corruption, is rarely, if ever, permitted to retain his situation. Numbers of fictitious accusations are sure to be trumped up against him, and sworn to and supported by the amount of evidence requisite to procure his dismissal; which follows, as a matter of course. It may be said that the English government ought to prevent such flagrant abuses; but this is much more easily said than done; and will probably remain unaccomplished; as our English officials, though fully aware of the universal roguery of their native subordinates, are far too few in number to control effectually, a system of corruption which prevails in every court and kutchery in the land.

attachment: but notwithstanding this, I cannot agree with Baillie Fraser, that they would gladly throw themselves on the protection of Britain, if they had the opportunity, in order to escape from the tyranny of their present rulers. They may entertain no affection for the reigning family; and might not greatly care who their sovereign was, so long as he was a Moslem and a Sheeah; but I cannot believe that they would willingly submit to be ruled by a Soonnee — far less by any infidel power.

The Persian army at present consists of about fifty regiments of *serbáz* (infantry); twelve troops of *suvára* (cavalry), besides the body guard; *toopchee* (artillery) to the amount of two thousand men; and *zamboorekchee* (camel-artillery) about two hundred individuals. The *zamboorek* is a swivel-gun carrying a ball of a pound weight and upwards, mounted on a camel. The rider sits on a saddle behind the gun, which he works without difficulty; and guides the animal by a long rein.

Each *fowj*, or regiment of infantry, contains 1000 individuals, including 800 *serbáz* (privates) and 200 others, of whom 159 are considered as *sáhebi manseb* (officers or men of rank and station), while the remaining 41 belong to the band. The pay of each *serbáz* is no more than seven tomâns a year, and this he sometimes does not get for two or three years together; and his *jeera* (rations) are, or ought to be, half a Tabreez

man, or rather more than three pounds, of bread daily. Every regiment is divided into ten *dusteh* (companies), and to each *dusteh* there is 1 *sooltân* (captain), whose pay is sixty tomâns; 2 *naibs* (lieutenants), whose pay is from thirty to forty tomâns annually; 2 *begzâdehs*, who ride in the rear of the regiment and look after the men: their pay is twenty tomâns each annually; 4 *vakeels* (sergeants), who get from ten to twelve tomâns; and 4 *serjoukas* (corporals), at eight tomâns yearly. The *sooltan*, *naib*, and *begzâdeh* are mounted officers, while the *vakeel* and *serjouka* are on foot. The regiment is commanded by a *serhang* (lieutenant-colonel), whose pay is 500 tomâns; and under whom are two *yâvers* (majors), who receive from 150 to 250 tomâns. Over every two *fowj* (regiments) is a *serteep* (full colonel), with a salary of 1000 tomâns a year.

The regiment has besides, a *moshriff* (head accountant) at 50 tomâns, and four clerks or writers, at from 30 to 40 tomâns each. The members of the band get from 8 to 15 tomâns.

The cavalry is of two kinds—the *gholâmi rikâbee*, or body-guard attendant on the Shah and princes — and the *gholâmi suvâr*, or ordinary cavalry. The first of these resemble Louis XI.'s Scottish archers, described in Quentin Durward. About four hundred individuals constitute this favoured guard, who receive each 60 tomâns and upwards yearly; being obliged to keep a servant

and three horses. Their daily rations are a *man* and a half of bread; with 4½ mans of barley and 9 of straw, for the horses. To every ten guardsmen there is a *dehbâshee*, or commander of ten; and to every hundred a *yoozbâshee* or centurion, whose pay is 500 tomâns.

The *gholâmi suvâr* or ordinary cavalry have, each man, from 10 to 15 tomâns pay, and daily rations of half a *man* of bread, a *man* and a half of barley, and three of straw. Every fifty horsemen are commanded by a *sooltân* (captain), who has 50 tomâns a year: under whom are two *naibs* (lieutenants) at 30 tomâns; two *vakeels* and two *serjoukas*, who have 15 tomâns. A *serkerda* (colonel of horse) commands every thousand men: his pay is 1000 tomâns annually.

Soldiers are levied from the towns and villages, pretty much on the impress plan. When an order has been issued from the capital, for levying a certain number of men from any place, it is usual for the villagers to subscribe and pay four or five tomâns annually, to any of their own people who do not object to serve. When these leave the village, this sum is paid to their families or relatives. Numerous abuses exist in this army besides that of irregular payment. I have heard of the rank and salary of a colonel being conferred on an infant just born!

Military tactics on the European system, engineering, &c., were introduced by Abbas Mirza, the present Shah's grandfather, who employed

English officers in organizing and disciplining his forces. These officers, who came chiefly from India, have spoken in terms of high praise of the Persian soldiers; who, when properly commanded, drilled, fed and paid, are excellent troops. When officered by their own countrymen, their condition is sufficiently bad. The Persian officer is destitute of every necessary quality for his post. He never drills his men, maintains no kind of discipline, does not attend to their wants, and his only care is to swindle them out of as much of their hard-earned badly paid wages, as he can manage to embezzle. To such officers, the men can have little attachment; and it is for this reason that Persian troops have so often behaved badly in the field. The Shah has lately dismissed the European officers (most of them Frenchmen) who disciplined his troops, finding them expensive servants; and in consequence, the entire Persian army is rapidly falling into the primitive condition of a disorganized collection of gangs of beggars and banditti. Some show of discipline is kept up at the capital, where the troops there stationed are regularly drilled, and I believe regularly paid; but away from Tehrân, all such matters are neglected entirely. A French officer, once in the Shah's service, thus describes the present state of the Persian troops:—

"Les soldats n'ont ni discipline, ni respect, ni "obéissance, pour leurs chefs; ces derniers n'ont "aucun sentiment de leurs droits, de leur devoir,

" de leur dignité, et sont incapables de guider " ou de réprimer convenablement leurs subor- " donnés."

There exists no commissariat in the Persian army; and no provision is made for supplying troops on the march. The men accordingly pillage, selling their stolen goods to the purveyors who follow the camp; and who, in turn, dispose of this plunder in the market. The march of Persian troops is a dreadful calamity to the inhabitants of the places through which they pass. The men without food or pay, are obliged to plunder, both by stealth and by open violence. This is not the poor soldier's fault—he must live, and cannot quit his regiment—but the blame rests with the despicable Government he serves, and the neglect and villainy of his commanding officers. Punishment is sometimes very severely inflicted: this depends upon the commander, who can do as he pleases; and often allows the greatest license to run on unheeded, and the worst conduct to pass unnoticed; and then suddenly punishes some trivial fault in the most cruel manner.* Great severity is often exercised, without any attempt being made to maintain a regular and proper restraint on the men's conduct and actions. Desertion is a crime usually visited with the most rigorous penalties: deserters are

* The cat used in our army is a mere plaything in comparison with the Persian implement, the tails of which are knotted thongs of hide.

sometimes flogged to death, or even burned alive. The present Vazeeri Nezâm, I have been informed, punishes soldiers for trifling faults, in the most horribly brutal ways — but this man has rendered himself proverbial for his cruelty.

Notwithstanding the exhausted condition of the Shah's exchequer, and the difficulty in maintaining the present standing army, the forces are to be greatly increased. Conscription is going on in all directions, and it is reported that forty or fifty new regiments are to be raised. How they are to be paid and armed is quite another question.

The entire population of Persia does not exceed, if it equals, eight millions of souls. The country is very thinly peopled; and a great proportion of it, being a barren desert, is destitute of inhabitants.

The entire annual revenue amounts to about three millions of tomâns, not quite a million and a half sterling; and even this paltry sum is realized with great difficulty, and much of it is constantly in arrears. In departments which can pay promptly, the revenue is often demanded in advance; and in other branches, it is rarely paid till long after it has fallen due. I endeavoured, when at Sheerauz, to give some account of the land revenue and other taxes. Every manager of revenue embezzles and pockets as much as he can, till he is deposed; and then it often happens that all his ill-gotten wealth is taken from him

by threats or torture. The Shah seems to look on his officials as extortioners, to be squeezed dry by himself — the grand extortioner of all — when ripe for plucking.

The commerce of Persia is very trifling. Two centuries ago, Thevenot described Persia as an emporium for the wealth of Turkey and the States of Europe, sent to India, and for the valuable products of the latter country forwarded to the West. This is no longer the case: Persia is impoverished, and her trade exceedingly limited. British goods were formerly imported, to the value of a million and a half sterling yearly; but at present the import of English manufactures is said to be gradually diminishing. By the treaty concluded by the Persian government with Sir John Mac Neill in 1841, British goods were to be imported at 5 per cent. duty — the most favourable terms permitted.* A like treaty has been made with Russia, and in this latter case the agreement is reciprocal; Persian produce being admitted into Russia at the same duty. Russian manufactures have greatly superseded ours; for though inferior, they are to be got cheaper, and meet with a readier sale. To England, Persia sends nothing, except a little silk. To

* Goods sent by British traders pay no more than 5 per cent. on entering the country; while those sent by Mahomedans pay about 2 per cent. at the port or frontier town, and a further duty is levied on them at every large town they pass through; so that the further they go the dearer they become.

Bombay, she sends horses, drugs, and dried fruit, to the amount of about 350,000*l.* annually; while she imports from India, specie and goods to the value of nearly 450,000*l.* To Arabia, the Turkish ports, and Russia, she sends grain, drugs, tobacco, and some silk and cotton stuffs; but the entire value of her exports, seldom exceeds one million sterling a year. The imports from India consist of chintz and other cloths, tea, sugar, cotton, indigo, iron and other metals: from England, France, and Russia, they comprise cutlery, fire-arms, cloth, glass, chinaware, watches, paper, and a few other articles.

Many serious drawbacks and obstacles stand in the way of commerce in this country. In the first place, despotism and insecurity of property, which prevent the proper employment of capital, as well as the development of the powers and resources of industry. Secondly, there are no roads — nothing at least deserving the name of a road — in the whole country; the best being little else than mere tracks, made by the constant passing of animals and men, upon which no wheeled vehicle could travel; and there is no carriage or means of transport for goods, save on the backs of mules and camels: a tedious and expensive way. Thirdly, there are no navigable rivers, and but few seaports of any importance, and Persia possesses no navy whatever.

In this country, no merchant can afford to be what we should consider an honest man. If he

keeps his word, pays his debts, honours bills when due, and restores money entrusted to him, he is sure to be marked as a rich man, which is tantamount to being a criminal, and he will, as surely, be liable to be persecuted, fleeced and screwed without mercy. However good his intentions may be, he must affect to put off his engagements, or to meet them with the greatest difficulty; otherwise his rapacious rulers will mark him for their prey. To thrive, a man must dissemble, lie and cheat with all his might — in his agreements, he must act on the principle of the painter in Timon of Athens, "To promise is courtly and fashionable; but performance is a kind of will and testament, which argues a great sickness in his judgment that makes it" — and however wealthy he may be, he must outwardly pretend poverty and straitened means. Among these merchants, I doubt not there are many who would be honest if they could; but under a corrupt and oppressive government, dissimulation and falsehood are compulsory accomplishments.*

Persia possesses few mines of the precious metals: nearly all the gold and silver in the

* Mahommed commended and enjoined honesty in trade. He strictly forbade all tricks, and decided that a seller is bound to expose defects in his goods to the buyer. He declared, moreover, that at the last day, honest merchants shall rank with the prophets! The noble and pious Waldenses of Piedmont refused to engage in commerce, that they might avoid falsehoods, oaths and frauds — which are sometimes to be found in trade in the West as well as in the East.

country being imported. There are, however, great quantities of copper, lead, and iron; and if these mines were properly worked, the profits would be very great. Some years ago, a party of Scottish miners, brought I believe by Sir H. Bethune Lindesay, was employed by the Persian government, in working mines in the Karadâgh mountains, which contain most extensive veins of metal: but the niggardly and short-sighted authorities thought fit to dispense with their services, when their operations were most promising; and now these vast stores of mineral wealth lie untouched. No private individual dare expend money — or show that he has it to spend — in so costly an undertaking as mining; and the beggarly Shah will not consent to lay out a farthing, in what would probably bring him a hundred-fold profits.

The general impecuniosity of the whole nation is remarkable. There seems to be no money in the country, in public or private possession. The salaries of official men are always in arrears, and often never paid. Government possesses no funds to remunerate public servants, far less to expend on any useful or beneficial works. An officer of government commonly gets a draft on the treasury to the amount of his salary—when he presents this, he is told that there is no money in the treasury, and the draft is dishonoured—he next endeavours to sell it to some bill-broker in the bazâr, but probably finds no one willing to

buy it. At length, after much importunity and remonstrance, the treasurer offers to pay him one-half of the sum, on condition of his giving a receipt for the whole! — and this proposal he is glad to accede to; knowing that he must otherwise wait for years before he obtains the money, if he ever gets it at all.

The complicated nature of Persian politics forbids their being discussed cursorily; and moreover, as I cannot pretend to be by any means well acquainted with the political relations of the court of Persia with Great Britain and the states of Europe, I may forbear comment on the subject. The importance of the maintenance of a favourable feeling towards Britain, in this country, as connected with the safety of our Indian empire, in preventing any co-operation of Persia with Russia, has been much debated, both at home and abroad. This is, probably, the only reason why England should care to maintain a friendly alliance with the Shah: for in every other respect, I cannot see how it could signify a straw to us, whether the terms we are on, with a state so insignificant, worthless, and in every way contemptible, as Persia, are good, bad, or indifferent.

Russia has, for some years past, been extending her empire far and wide in every direction; and it would be idle to suppose that she does not contemplate, sooner or later, the conquest of fertile and wealthy India, and the expulsion of British

power from that country. By taking possession, in the first place, of Persia (which but for British interference she could do whenever she pleased), the pursuit of this ambitious scheme would be greatly facilitated. She has now command over the Caspian and Black Seas, and Turkey and Persia lie at her mercy; their miserable tottering powers being upheld only by the jealousy with which England and France regard the encroachments of the Czar. Supposing Persia to be in alliance with, or under the command of Russia,—an army could easily be raised in Khorassan, officered by Russians, and marched to Herat: and the Affghans could hardly prevent their proceeding eastward to the Indus.

The Persians profess to hate the Russians, and very likely do so; as they detest, more or less, every Christian nation; but, at the same time, they have learned to respect and dread the power, which they outwardly affect to despise. Their own accounts of their contests and struggles with Russia are amusing enough. I have lately read a history of Fat,h Alee Shah's reign, wherein marvellous stories are told about Persian prowess and success in their campaigns; while the author quite forgets to tell his readers how completely Persia was humbled, and how she was obliged to surrender to Russia, a very large portion of her northern territory.

At the treaties of peace concluded between Persia and Russia, in 1813 and 1828, the former

ceded to the latter a great part of her possessions, including Georgia, Mingrelia, Erivan, Sheervan, and other territories lying on the west of the Caspian Sea, and agreed to maintain no navy upon that sea. Russia still continues to push on her approaches; and ever and anon makes demands which Persia must concede; for the Czar has lent considerable sums of money to the Shah, which the latter cannot repay, and he dares not quarrel with his powerful northern neighbour.

Persia, as a nation and kingdom, is now effete and worn out: and to hope that she will ever regain her former eminence, is vain. No instance has ever occurred of a nation that has culminated and declined, recovering its position and prosperity. Asia was, unquestionably, the cradle of the human race, as well as of civilization and science. Great Babylon, whose proud citizens desired to carry their vast structure up to heaven — mighty Assyria, whose capital, the mistress of the East, was three days' journey in circumference — Persia, whose despot monarchs gave laws which altered not, from the Arabian sea to the shores of the Mediterranean—wealthy India, and learned and superstitious Egypt, regarding which empires we know so little, but of the vast dominion and magnificence of which, gigantic ruins still afford ample proof — those ancient states, in magnificence, luxury and power, equalled, if they did not surpass, any existing kingdoms — but they have passed away — the sun of their

glory and prosperity has culminated, declined, sunk, and will never rise again. Modern Persia, poor, heartless and nerveless, drags on a precarious existence, a portion of the "weird she has to dree," and in her disorganized condition cannot last longer than the powers of Europe choose to allow her.

The same results have attended the career of nations of Europe. What once were Italy, Spain and Portugal, and what are they now? Will Genoa and Venice ever again contend for the supremacy of the Levantine seas, and the whole commerce of the rich East?—or will the Flemish burghers again take the first rank in European trade and manufactures? Will our own native land always hold the high place she now occupies? — a sad reflection; but why should Britain be exempt from the general rule by which nations grow great, accomplish their task, decline and fall. Macaulay, in one of his admirable essays, speaks of some future event (I forget what) as likely to happen, when some gentleman tourist from New Zealand seats himself upon a broken arch of what once was London Bridge, in the midst of a vast solitude, to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. The passage has become a hackneyed one, and I quote it from memory, and perhaps not very correctly. In spite of M. Ledru Rollin's assertions and predictions, I will not suppose this decline to have commenced yet; nor do I believe it will, so long as England is entitled

to be considered the bulwark of Protestant Christianity. At present, the two greatest and most flourishing nations on earth — England and her giant daughter the United States of America — attest, by their prosperity, that "Righteousness exalteth a nation," and that in temporal things even, God will uphold those that maintain and defend "the faith once delivered to the saints" Long may this high Christian pre-eminence of my native land be perpetuated — and long may it be ere her decline shall come to pass; and far distant the day when, to use Mr. Alison the historian's words, "the Queen of the Waves shall sink into an eternal though not forgotten slumber."

CHAP. XXXII.

Return to Ispahan.—Persian Music.—Cheapness of Living.—Persian Society.

On the third of May, I left Tehrân in a caravan, travelling at night, as the days were getting hot. I returned to Ispahan by the same route by which I had come, and consequently need say little regarding the journey. I had made up my mind to pass the hot season at Ispahan; the climate of that place being healthy; and the station, in many respects, preferable to most other places.

We commenced our march, daily, after sunset, and reached the next stage at about sunrise. I then had my bed spread, and slept till noon, when I got up and breakfasted. These night marches are, at best, a disagreeable mode of travel; they so completely subvert one's accustomed habits. The feeling of being overtaken with sleep while riding along, is a most unpleasant one; and to this mistimed drowsiness I have occasionally been liable. Do what I would to keep myself awake, my brain would begin to

picture monstrous objects floating around me, and to build castles in the stars, till a sudden jolt would recall me to partial consciousness, and a clutch at the mane of my horse, save me from tumbling headlong out of the saddle. The best preventive of this untimely somnolence, I have found to be, to drink a quantity of strong tea, just before starting. The Persian muleteers contrive to sleep very well upon the broad packsaddles of their mules. They lie forward, with the head over the animal's neck, and covering themselves over with their felt pea-jackets, stretch out their legs at full extent across the hinder part of the packsaddle, which is so broad that one cannot easily tumble off, unless the animal comes down with him. In this way, a muledriver can obtain an hour's sleep whenever he feels disposed during the march.

The luxury of ice was to be had at nearly every stage; the ice receptacles having been opened at the approach of warm weather; and for a single *shahee*, one could procure as much of this as he required.

At Kashan, they had nearly finished gathering in the barley harvest, while at the next stage, Kohrood, this crop was quite green, and had not commenced ripening. In these fine moonlight nights, the people reap during the night, and avoid the fierce heat of the sun. A few patches of snow still remained on the tops of some of the hills around Kohrood. At Koom, where we

halted for a day, I encountered the rather disagreeable spectacle of a caravan of corpses, being conveyed from some places eastward, all the way to Mush,hedi Alee (the place where Alee is interred) at Nejeff, not far from Cufa, on the other side of the Euphrates; a journey of six weeks at least. Each mule bore two dead bodies, slung like portmanteaus on either side; and by the time they reach their destination, their loathsome burdens must be in a shocking state; for already the effluvia was most obnoxious. A few of the friends and relatives of some of the deceased, accompanied this mournful caravan; but by far the greater number of the corpses had been consigned to the muleteers, without any one else to look after them. It is singular that Mussulmans should attach much importance to, or consider any sanctity derivable from, burial in any particular spot — the notion appears so entirely contrary to the spirit of their religion. Great numbers of dead are sent continually, from all parts of Persia, for interment, at the sepulchre of Alee, on the frontier of the Arabian desert.*

I had, for a travelling companion, another of the Kajar family, bound for Sheerauz. He was a

* The prevailing idea is, that by being buried near a holy saint, they will be raised along with him at the Resurrection, and receive his protection and countenance — but the opinion is certainly heterodox. A similar idea seems to have been received in Israel of yore. The old prophet of Bethel desired to be buried beside the man of God that came from Judah, whom he had deceived unto his destruction. 1 Kings, xiii. 31.

young man, a few years past thirty, of vivacious temperament, perpetually talking, and fond of reciting poetry, particularly the Shah Nameh, of which he could repeat verses by the hour. Like most of his family, he was rather a bon vivant, and not at all averse to a glass of wine; though he was a good deal kept in order by a Seiyid, whom he had picked up, as we left Tehrân, and whose travelling expenses he was paying, to Sheerauz, as an act of charity and religious merit. He stood somewhat in awe of this holy personage, who, by the way, always eyed me with exceeding disfavour, and once or twice admonished my new acquaintance on the propriety of cutting my infidel, unclean, and in every way improper, society. This the Kajar told me privately, when he came one night into my cell in the caravansary of Moorchakhoor, with a bottle of wine hidden under his riding-coat. He appeared to be rather tired of his sacred companion, who, I observed, treated him with not a little hauteur, though he was indebted to his kindness, not only for means of conveyance, but for every morsel he ate and drank — which charity he condescended to receive as homage due to his exalted sanctity. My new friend was not a little inquisitive; and possessed rather more information than common. As generally happens, when conversing with a Persian, we got into an argument on religious subjects; and he accepted from me, a copy of the Persian Bible. The Seiyid, when he heard of

this, was very wroth, and ordered him to restore the book or destroy it: he promised to do one or the other, but privately packed it up in one of his baggage-trunks.

Ispahan looked remarkably well, as we reached the city. The trees were in full leaf, and the roses in blow. There are no moss-roses in this country, but abundance of the common red and white, and also yellow roses. There is one very beautiful kind, which I have never seen elsewhere, and have heard is peculiar to Persia, called the *nasteran.* The bush is as large as a good-sized tree, with long pendulous branches, like a weeping-willow, loaded with a profusion of white roses, as if a heavy shower of snow had fallen upon it.

Nightingales abound in all the gardens at this season, filling the air with their dulcet notes, which they warble all day long, as well as by night. The Persian *bulbul* is precisely the same bird as our English nightingale, as nearly as I can recollect the latter. It is a small bird with brown wings and back, and of a yellowish-gray colour underneath. It is migratory here, as in England, making its appearance with the roses in April, and disappearing with the rose, at the end of the summer.

In India, the name of *bulbul* is given a bird of a totally different description — a pretty species of shrike — more remarkable for its pugnacious propensities than for any harmony of voice. It is not a bird of passage.

There are but few different kinds of birds about Ispahan, or anywhere else in Persia, as far as I have seen. Besides the nightingale, the only birds hereabouts are, the common sparrow, the blackbird, woodpecker, and crested lark — two species of crow — the *kelágh* or common black crow, and the *zágh*, a gray-throated bird like our jackdaw — the *kelághi jarrak* or magpie, the same as in England — the *lásha-khoor* (carcass-eater), one of the vulture tribe, and the *sauveh*, a white and gray wagtail. On the banks of the river, I have observed the *oordek* or common wild-duck, which I have shot sometimes — the *laglag* or white stork, in India denominated the "paddy-bird" — and the *máhi-khoorek* (little fish-eater), a small and beautiful species of kingfisher. The blue wild pigeon is common everywhere, and is here domesticated as much as possible, in the pigeon-towers.

The *chenár* tree is now in full leaf; and a very handsome tree it is, with a tall erect trunk, white smooth bark, and large pale-green leaves. On the plain beyond Julfa, there is but little vegetation except prickly shrubs. There are several kinds of thistles, two of which are eaten by the poorer classes — one called the *kangur*, large like the garden artichoke, which goes by the same name — and the other, the *shekertagár*, very similar to our Scottish thistle.

I am again established in my old quarters in Julfa. Though the levying of soldiers from

among the Armenians has been put a stop to, these poor people are subjected to a severe exaction of money, as a *sâdir* or irregular tax, under pretence of supporting and maintaining the new troops which the Shah has lately raised. In order to procure money to satisfy this oppressive demand, they have been obliged even to sell some of the ornaments and plate belonging to their churches; and many of them, including some of the priests, have been beaten and maltreated. Cherâgh Alee Khan may perchance be superseded in the government of the city, when the Shah arrives, by some one who can afford to pay the prime minister a good fee for the situation; and acting on the chance of this contingency, he is now busily making hay while the sun continues to shine, and extorting all that he can out of the people; the Armenians, in particular, being looked on as fair game.

The river is now very low, most of the water having been drawn off in channels, for the rice plantations at Linjân. The distribution of water is superintended by an officer termed the *aubyâr*, and the cultivators earnestly watch his proceedings, in order to see that their respective fields obtain a due share of the precious element.

Ice is much used; and the cheapness of this luxury enables almost everyone to enjoy it. It is brought round in the morning, upon donkies and mules, and a certain quantity left at each house, sufficient for the daily use of the family.

I get as much as I require, at the rate of a *shahee* or one halfpenny per day, and this is usually a large block weighing eight or ten pounds. Not only are all fluids for drinking cooled, but the vessel of the *kaleon* is commonly filled with pounded ice and water.

I have visited the city only once since my return, to pay my respects to Cheràgh Alee Khan. On the same day, I visited a *zoor-khoneh* or gymnasium, of which there are three or four in Ispahan. I had previously seen one in Tehràn, attached to the embassy. The *zoor-khoneh* resembles a cockpit: it consists of a sunk floor, surrounded by a ledge, several feet high, enclosed in Gothic arches, forming huge niches in the wall. Here the spectators sit, while the wrestlers and other performers exercise upon the floor below. Two or three musicians are stationed in one part of the ledge, making an incessant noise with their instruments, and chanting, at the same time, a monotonous song. The exercise, at which about a dozen men were engaged, consisted in jumping about, flourishing heavy wooden clubs and dumb-bells, and occasional wrestling between two of the party.

Of the nature of Persian music, I know little or nothing, not being myself a musician. I believe it to consist chiefly of melody, and there is little, if any, of what we term harmony and counterpoint. They have twenty-four *perda* or notes; but whether their scale is such as our

masters of the science would approve of, I am unable to decide. The science is not in the best repute in Mussulman countries. Father Martin Luther held that, next to theology, music was the science best worth knowing — Mahommed, like a barbarian as he was, condemned it as a delusion of the devil.

One day, I got an *oostâd*, or professor of the art, to come to my house and perform. He brought with him an assistant, and two boys who could sing; but I must confess I admired none of the performance, vocal or instrumental. The oostâd played on a *târ*, a kind of guitar, the body of which was made of walnut faced with parchment. It was strung with five wires, three of brass and two of steel, and played on with a little plectrum of thin silver. The assistant had a *kamoncheh*, a kind of fiddle, about a yard long, with a body or sounding-board in the middle, faced with parchment. It was strung with catgut, and played on with a bow. The boys had really fine voices, which they utterly spoiled by squalling in falsetto. Persian tunes, like all other Eastern music, are not at all to my taste. "There is in souls a sympathy with sounds," quoth Cowper; but I could never experience any feeling, save disgust, at this style of music, which all appears to me to be of the sort recommended by the melancholy Jaques — "No matter how it be in tune, so it make noise enough."

Living in this country is certainly very cheap;

and the necessaries of life are to be had for a trifle. Houserent is lower than I have ever known it elsewhere; and servants' wages are not higher than at Madras, while one requires much fewer of them. The following exhibits my own household expenses for one month at this place—

	Tomâns.	Kerooneea.	Shahees.
Houserent	3	0	0
Wages of head-servant, groom and cook	6	2	0
Barley and grass for horse . .	1	0	0
Bread (4 shahee mans) . .	0	2	0
Meat (3 shahee mans) . .	0	6	0
Rice (4 shahee mans) . .	0	5	10
Fowls (a dozen) . . .	0	4	16
Eggs (10 daily) . . .	0	4	0
Milk	0	4	10
Maust (a large cupfull daily) .	0	1	0
Fresh butter	0	3	0
Clarified butter (for the kitchen) .	0	6	0
Sugar (1 shahee man) . .	0	5	0
Tea.	1	2	0
Salt and spices . . .	0	1	0
Candles (tallow) . . .	0	4	10
Vegetables	0	1	10
Ice	0	1	10
Sheerauz tobacco (½ shahee man) .	0	4	0
Washing	0	4	0
Firewood (45 shahee mans) . .	0	9	0
Charcoal (5 shahee mans) . .	0	3	0
	18	4	6

Altogether not quite eight pounds sterling, counting the tomân at its real value*; and this

* The tomân is commonly reckoned at nine shillings; but I believe it to be really worth no more than 100 pence, or eight shillings and fourpence.

is reckoned rather dear living — three tomans for houserent being high, and the other expenditure might be more economical. In the above list, I have not enumerated extras, such as wine and fruit. Potatoes are not now in season. In winter, they cost from one to two keroonees a shahee man. The shopkeepers and others who supply provisions, &c., keep their accounts with their customers, on tallies or notched sticks; as they were wont to do in Britain in former days, when the accomplishments of reading and writing were not quite as general as they are now.

Fruit is becoming plentiful. The *zerdâloo* (apricot) is now so abundant that it sells for four shahees (twopence) a man of 14½ pounds. The *geelâs* (white cherry) is nearly over, and is succeeded by the *âlubaloo*, a small black cherry like the Scottish gean. Mulberries white and black are plentiful, as well as the *goorjeh*, a small reddish-yellow plum, and the *âloocheh*, a sweet bullace plum. The other fruits are not yet ripe. There are no strawberries here; though they are grown at Tehrân, where they go by the name of the "Frank's mulberry." I have heard that they grow in abundance wild, on the hills in Mazanderân. The pineapple is unknown in Persia. Of vegetables there is no great variety; but cucumbers are so abundant, that they sometimes sell for a single shahee per man of 14½ pounds! The Persians eat vast quantities of raw vegetables, unripe fruit, and all kinds of trash; and won-

der how they come to be attacked by bilious fevers!

The gardens here are often affected by a blight, which they call *zeng* or "rust," caused by untimely rain; but there has been very little of this during the present year. No locusts have appeared at Ispahan this year; but in some parts, the crops and fruits have been damaged by the *seen*, a small beetle, which is very destructive. There are no snails in the gardens; indeed, I believe this reptile is unknown in Persia.

The barley-harvest commenced shortly after my arrival, and having now been gathered in, the peasants are busy threshing the produce. Threshing is performed here, in the same manner as in Egypt and many other parts of the East, with a kind of sledge (here called *choom*, and at Sheerauz *boorra*), having three or four axles beneath, each armed with several iron wheels with sharp serrated edges. The crop is collected in a heap; and then spread out, layer after layer, round the heap; and the *choom* drawn over it, by a horse or a pair of bullocks, the driver sitting on the machine. This is driven round and round, forcing the grain from the husk and cutting up the straw at the same time, till the entire heap has been threshed. After the *choomkesh* or "thresher" has concluded his labours, the *boojar* or "winnower" comes armed with an *owsee* or large wooden fork, with a long handle, a broad head, and the wooden prongs or teeth very close

together. With this, he throws the threshed crop high into the air, against the wind; and the grain falls direct to the ground, while the chaff and chopped straw are carried a little to one side. The grain is finally sifted; and sometimes cleared in a *tabak* or wooden hoop with parchment stretched upon it — the "fan" of Scripture — after which it is ready for grinding in the mill.

A considerable quantity of *shafder* (clover), both red and white, and *yoonjeh* (lucerne), are cultivated for the sake of cattle, and they appear to thrive well. Horses, at this season, are mostly fed on *tilleet*, which is the *kusseel* or shoots of barley, cut up small and mixed with chopped straw.

On the 9th of June, the British mission arrived; the minister taking up his quarters in Julfa. The Shah is not expected for a fortnight or three weeks to come. The Russian and Turkish ministers have also arrived: and there is now a larger concourse of Europeans (few as they are after all) at Ispahan, than that city has witnessed for many a day. The Russian minister is an agreeable and gentlemanly person, which is more than I can say for the rest of the Muscovite party.

With Persian society (excepting perhaps that of one or two individuals) I am thoroughly tired; indeed I may, without exaggeration, say heartily disgusted. Persians are, to a certain extent, pleasing at first sight, on account of their polite manners; but the novelty of this soon wears off, and I must

own they certainly do not improve on more intimate acquaintance. There is a deep moral depravity about these men, which is absolutely sickening; and they are so devoid of shame and decency, that even their habitual hypocrisy does not prompt them to conceal their utter want of principle, or restrain them from talking of, and admitting participation in, the most disgraceful actions.

Their total disregard for truth is a serious defect, which does not however strike so forcibly, any one previously acquainted with other Eastern nations, for they are all lamentably culpable in this respect; though in fluency and ingenuity of falsehood, the Persian surpasses every other. It is singular how Asiatics at all times prefer lying to truth, crooked ways to straight, intrigue and trickery to open and fair dealing — even where the latter course would be by far the easiest and most advantageous to them. They seem to entertain such a repugnance to candour and straightforwardness, that to be simply honest, in any one particular, is, with them, almost an impossibility. I will not imagine for a moment, that this low state of morals, among the Persians, can arise from any mental or constitutional defect. It must be owing entirely to the abominable course they are trained up in from infancy. It would appear that Nature had intended them for a fine and noble race, by imparting to them intellects of first-rate order, and the rudiments of

a character which, if properly developed by a salutary moral influence, might render them inferior to no nation in the world — as it is, however, they are probably the last people on earth, with whom any honest and right-thinking man would choose to associate.

The weather is now very warm during the day, but the heat is not oppressive as in India. The hottest time is about two hours after noon; but I have not seen the thermometer higher than 87° in my room. In the morning, at sunrise, it is generally at 70°. The weather will be warmer shortly, as the latter part of this month is the hottest time of the year in Persia.* The nights are always comparatively cool; and in this respect, the climate of this country possesses a great advantage over an Indian summer, where the night is sometimes almost as warm and oppressive as the day. Like every one else, I sleep now on the roof of my house. The nights are clear and bright; the air very dry, little dew falls, and that so pure as to be innocuous.

The dew, it is said, will not rust steel, and I believe the assertion; for as far as my experience goes, I have found it to be just as Moore has described it:—

> "—— dew whose night drops would not stain
> The best and brightest scymitar
> That ever youthful Sultan wore
> On the first morning of his reign."

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* July 1st.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Fast of the Ramazân. — Arrival of the Shah. — Archery. — Physiognomy of the Persians. — Melons. — Armenian School. — Education in Persia and India. — Royal Promises.

The fast of the Ramazân commenced this year, with our July. When this lunar month falls in summer, as at present, the fast is very severe: for not only is the interval between sunrise and sunset much longer than in winter, but in this hot weather, the prohibition of all drink, for not even a drop of water may be swallowed, tells very hard upon many people. At the *tuloo,i fajr* or first faint gleam of daybreak, a quarter of an hour before sunrise, the booming of a cannon, fired in the great Meidân, warned the Ispahanees that the day's fast had commenced; and at *maghrib*, or a quarter of an hour after the disappearance of the sun, another cannon announced the grateful intelligence that the period had terminated, and men might lawfully eat and drink. Just before the morning's gunfire, the people eat their *sahari* or early meal, which is to sustain

them during the day; and after the evening gun, they usually drink a quantity of water and smoke two or three kaleons, before commencing the *iftár* or nightly breakfast. During the day they are dull and stupid, like logs: many of them sleep all day, and keep awake enjoying themselves all night. With few exceptions, the Persians keep this fast strictly. They are superstitious on this point; and many of them, who habitually break their prophet's injunctions at all other times, think that their manifold sins and transgressions may be wiped off and atoned for by rigidly observing the fast.* I have seen several stout portly individuals, who, towards the end of the month, had become lank and emaciated; clearly showing that their fasting was not mere pretence. Among the Soofees or free-thinking class, there are some who observe the fast, and others who do not: but of this class, there are very few in Ispahan.

On the 15th of July, about noon, the Shah entered Ispahan, and established his court in the Chihl Sitoon; while his numerous ladies found lodgings in the Sar Poosheeda. The day was so intensely hot, that I did not go out of the city

* Many of the observances enjoined by Mahommed's creed mark a worldly religion, devised by one ignorant of Nature's laws, and not adapted to mankind at large. Those who dwell in some countries within the Arctic circle, where the sun is visible, night and day, for weeks together in summer, and wholly invisible for as long a period in winter, would be puzzled to observe the Ramazân.

to witness the royal entrance. The usual ceremonies were performed on the occasion. All the principal people of the city, and a great proportion of the inhabitants besides, went forth to meet his majesty, guns were fired, prayers chanted by a large band of moollahs, and as the sovereign approached, bottles of sweetmeats were broken on the road before him; and oxen decapitated, and their heads thrown in his way—a very ancient and sufficiently barbarous custom.

The weather had become so warm, about the middle of July, that I changed my house for a more commodious dwelling, in another quarter of Julfa. In the end of July, I saw the thermometer as high as 94° in my sitting-room; but the sun here does not possess the overwhelming knock-me-down power which "flaming Phœbus with his fiery eye" exercises in India. Early in August, there was a change in the weather, and it is now much cooler.* The glass stands at 80° and 82° at noon, in my room.

On the 19th of Ramazân, the commemoration of the martyrdom of Alee by the hand of an assassin, was held, and kept up for three days, during which, shops were shut and all business suspended. In the mosques, a kind of dramatic representation of the deed commemorated, was performed,—a proceeding which many strict Mussulmans do not approve of. The Ramazân terminated on the 29th of July: and on the following day, the

* August 25th.

1st of Showâl, was celebrated the *eidi fitr* or "festival of fast-breaking;" on which occasion, the people visit and congratulate each other, as they do at Now Rooz. Provisions of all kinds are given as alms, to *fakeers* and poor persons — a piece of charity denominated *zikâti-beden*, or "alms for purification of the person," as preparatory, I presume, to leading an amended life till the next fast.

The Shah, on this day, held a levée, and gave a *sheelân* or public feast. On the night when the new moon appeared (anxiously longed for by the fasting populace), I was made aware of a common Persian superstition, which I had never happened to hear of before.* When a man first beholds the new moon, at the commencement of any month in the year, he shuts his eyes, covering them with his hand, and will not willingly open them, until he supposes that he has some pleasing and auspicious object before him. Some consider it lucky to look first at a tree, a shrub, a stream of running water, or a handsome person, male or female. Should any one, on opening his eyes, behold an ugly face or other inauspicious object, he may take it for certain that he will have bad luck during that month! This absurdity is

* Apropos of superstitions, I may mention that the Persians consider the number "thirteen," so unlucky, that in general, they will not even name it. When they have occasion to allude to this number, instead of mentioning *seezdeh* (thirteen) they say *ziyâd* (much, more) or *heech* (nothing).

universal; and the ceremony of shutting and opening the eyes, as I have described, has been pronounced *moostahabb* (a proper and commendable act) by the doctors of Sheeah divinity. It has been supposed that Sheeah doctrines contain a smaller amount of superstitious nonsense than those of the Soonnees — there never was a greater mistake; as I can testify, having read a good deal of both. There is, indeed, no lack of nonsense and intolerance in the dogmas and opinions of some of the Soonnee expounders of the faith; but on the whole, the Sheeah tenets are decidedly more absurd, as well as more intolerant. It is on this account, no doubt, that free-thinking and disbelief are more common among an intelligent sharp-witted people like the Persians, than with any other Mahomedan nation.

I visited the city on the day after the *eidi fitr*. The people looked animated and happy—quite new creatures, after the tedious and exhausting fast—I saw then, for the first time, the Shah's brother, prince Abbas Mirza, a good-looking boy of thirteen or fourteen. He was riding, with a few attendants following him, but undistinguished by any display of rank or dignity. The Shah rarely sees his young brother, and has never shown him any kindness. The late Shah, it is said, greatly preferred this boy to his elder brother, and intended to nominate him as his successor, particularly as his mother is a lady of rank superior to the mother of Nâsir-ud-deen.

This design was frustrated by the sudden demise of Mahommed Shah; and when Nâsir-ud-deen was placed on the throne, he fully intended, they say, to blind and mutilate his little brother, in order to obviate all chance of any future attempt being made in his favour. He was, however, persuaded to spare him, on account of his youth; but the boy's present position must be, at best, a precarious one; for a single word whispered by any mischief maker in the Shah's ear, might awaken the royal jealousy, and cost him his eyes, or perhaps his life.

I have lately seen several Mahomedans, returning from the various gardens hereabouts, in that condition, in which alone, according to Dr. Johnson, a man can be truly happy in the present moment. Intoxication is a pleasure to which Persians are no strangers; though it is generally indulged in secretly. At present, I suppose, they are all anxious to indemnify themselves for the privations they have undergone during the Ramazân. In former times, wine-drinking must have been very common among all Moslems. The "Arabian Nights," though fictions, present, undoubtedly, a correct picture of the manners of former times; and from these stories it would appear that the bottle was circulated pretty freely in the days of good old Haroon-ur-Rasheed. In later ages also, the custom prevailed in other courts than that of Persia. When the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, visited

the court of the Indian Emperor Jehânghire, he found that potentate and his friends much addicted to the worship of Bacchus.

In the very singular and interesting autobiography of Sooltan Bâber, the conqueror of India, mention is made of hard drinking as if it was a common practice. Bâber himself drank like a fish, till the latter years of his life, when he made the *toubeh* or vow of repentance. Taking opium and smoking *hasheesh* or intoxicating hemp, are often done secretly here; but these practices are perhaps not so common in Persia as in some other countries.

One day I observed some young lads — evidently of rank, for they had finely-caparisoned horses and numerous servants with them — practising at a mark with the bow and arrow, on a plain near the river — the first time I had seen a bow used in this country. The Persian bow, in shape, resembles that with which Cupid is usually represented—namely, with a handle in the centre, and the horns arching out in curves on both sides — the true classical form. It is composed of thin strips of wood or horn, covered over with the sinews and gut of the deer, laid longitudinally in strips, and then warped round with narrower strings of sinew. These are made up in a raw state; and when dried, the bow is like one piece of hard horn. It is then painted, gilt and varnished. When unstrung, the ends of the bow are turned over in the reverse direction. To string

it, the horseman places one end against the high peak of his saddle, and throws his leg over the bow, leaning his whole weight upon it, so as to bend it sufficiently to admit of its being strung. The same kind of bow is used in many other parts of the East. Shooting with the bow and arrow was formerly much practised in Persia, but it is now becoming obsolete, these weapons being no longer used in war, or even in the chase. The Shah, I have heard, practises frequently, and is a skilful archer.

I rarely go into the city, which is crowded with the Shah's troops and the numerous attendants of the camp. Every person having any pretensions to rank or consequence, must be constantly attended by a number of servants, riding with him wherever he goes. The Persians estimate a man's worth by the outward show and parade he keeps up; and as this is the only idea they can form of his dignity, it is necessary that he should be continually attended by a troop of insolent bullying menials, mounted on horses caparisoned as handsomely as their master can afford. These fellows are a nuisance to everyone, particularly when the master is a man of high rank, for then they consider it their duty and privilege to domineer without bounds — and must often be no small incumbrance to their lord; but to this inconvenience he must submit, as he would avoid popular contempt. The people would lose all respect for the Shah himself, if he were

to take a ride alone, and on a plainly-equipped horse.

The Persians are a decidedly good-looking race; yet there is something repulsive in their handsome, intelligent countenances. An open, ingenuous face, so common in my native land, is never to be met with here — I do not recollect having seen a single one, in this country. Every Persian countenance bears the stamp of knavery and baseness, impressed on its features in characters so plain and legible, that any but a blind man can read them without chance of mistake. The usual characteristics of a handsome Persian face, are, — an oval-shaped visage, an aquiline nose, a large dark sleepy eye, and a mouth so voluptuous as to be disgusting in a man. The complexion of many, who do not labour out of doors, or expose themselves to the sun, is but very little darker than that of an Englishman.

The climate of Ispahan, like that of the greater part of Persia, is exceedingly dry, and the air so destitute of humidity as to draw off the moisture of the body to an unpleasant degree. I do not know whether this is productive of any injurious effect on the constitution, but I have often, of late, felt great irritability of the nervous system.

The dust is a great annoyance here: it is in vast abundance, and so fine that it pervades everywhere. No rain is expected, until towards the end of October; and at present, the surface

of the ground appears to be converted, by dint of heat and dryness, into impalpable powder. Morier has pronounced Ispahan to be unhealthy during a great part of the year; but I apprehend that that intelligent traveller has been led to draw an erroneous conclusion, in this instance, by reasoning too hastily from inaccurate information. The weather is certainly liable to sudden changes, but in a dry clear atmosphere, this is of no consequence, however pernicious these changes may be under a damp and vapour-laden sky. From all I can learn, the proportion of sickness here, is very small among all classes of people; and severe complaints are rarely prevalent. The frequency of bilious affections and fevers, about this time, can be readily accounted for, by the way in which so many of the people gorge themselves with fruit and raw vegetables, which they devour in incredible quantities.

The fruits recently ripened are — the *shaleel* (nectarine) — *sheftáloo* (peach). Oranges, of which there are several kinds — the *madanee*, a sweet insipid fruit, like some sorts of Indian orange — the *nárinj*, a sour orange, used in cookery — *nárengee*, more resembling the common Portugal orange, neither absolutely sweet nor sour, like the two first mentioned, but what the Persians term *meikhoosh*, or a happy mixture of the two * — *too,i soorkh*, or "red inside," like

* The word *meikhoosh* expresses a combination of sweet and acid flavour, common to the juice of many fruits and different

the Maltese blood-orange — *leemoo*, the common sour lime — *bukroy*, the sweet lime — and *batâvee*, the shaddock, a fruit said to have been introduced into Persia from Batavia, by some traders to Java; and from which town it has derived its appellation. None of these oranges are by any means as good as those ordinarily procurable in England.

Grapes are now ripening: of these, the common kinds are the *reeshi bâba*, a long-shaped large grape of a pale green colour, and very sweet flavour — the *angoori siyâh*, a purple grape, from which common raisins are made, and the *askeri*, a small sweet stoneless grape, which when dried makes the *kishmish* or Sultana raisin. Besides these, there are the *seeb* (apple) and *goolâbee* (pear), of which there are many sorts, but none very good — and the pride of Ispahan, the *kherbuza* or musk-melon. The melons of Ispahan are the finest in Persia, and probably the best in the world. They are of all sorts and sizes, from the *germek*, a fruit scarcely larger than a cricket-ball, to the *goorgaubee*, an enormous melon, two of which are a load for a stout donkey.

The greatest possible care and attention are paid to the culture of the melon. The seeds are sown in the middle of Aries (beginning of April), the ground having been previously ploughed,

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wines, &c. It is singular that we have no English word to express this; for I suppose a mongrel term like "dulco-acid" can hardly be called an English word.

watered, and laid out in ridges. While the soil is moist, little holes are made in the ridges, about three inches deep, and a span apart from each other; and in these the melon seeds are dropped, after being first soaked in water for six or seven hours. Three or four seeds are inserted in each hole, and it is filled up with fine mould unmixed with sand. The melon-ground is then watered once every three days, until the plants shoot forth; and after these have appeared for some days, one hardy plant is left growing in each hole, all the other less promising shoots being weeded out and cast away. Manure is then applied, and the proper kind is pigeon's dung, as I have formerly mentioned. The ground is afterwards watered every other day. As the plants increase in size, they are trained along the ground, partly covered up with soil, and sometimes a little saltpetre is sprinkled over the beds, but this custom is not universally followed. The first yellow flower which the plant puts forth, withers in two or three days: the top of the plant is then cut off, and other flowers soon make their appearance from the sides of the shoot, which, in process of time, become melons. Two or three melons should be left on each plant to ripen, and the others plucked off and thrown away. The beds must then be well watered daily. The larger kinds of melon (and some of these are of immense bulk) when ripe, are so delicate, that—as all the gardeners say—should a trotting horse pass by

the ground where they lie, the slight reverberation will cause the fruit to burst! We have heard of certain passes in the Alps, where the cautious guides warn the traveller not to speak, lest the agitation of the air should loosen the impending heaps of snow above: and the party is obliged silently to proceed along —

> " Mute lest the air, convuls'd by sound,
> Rend from above, a frozen mass,"

as Rogers hath sung. And if the trifling resonance of the human voice can suffice to bring down an avalanche, I see no reason why we should discredit the Ispahanee melon-grower's assertion.

The quince is another fruit for which Ispahan is noted, as it grows to a much larger size here than elsewhere: they are not yet ripe.

I have before mentioned the Armenian school in Julfa, which I have visited at different times. An Armenian merchant at Madras bequeathed, on his deathbed, a sum of 20,000 rupees, for the establishment of this school, at the place whence his family originally came. The interest of this sum, amounting to 800 rupees annually, supports the school, which has nearly one hundred scholars attending it. It is attached to the church of St. Stephen, a small impoverished chapel, which has once been in a more prosperous condition. The schoolmaster is an Armenian, who was educated at Madras. The boys are taught to read the

Bible in Armenian, with a smattering of geography and history; but no mathematics, or even simple arithmetic. Some of them study Persian, and one or two are learning English. There is a sad want of method in the instruction imparted to these scholars; and the irregularity must tend to impede all beneficial progress.

In this country, our language is less known than in, probably, any quarter of the globe, not wholly barbarous; while French and other European languages are equally unknown. I have met with one or two Persians who had attempted to acquire something of English, but they had given it up, at the commencement, alleging that it was so harsh and discordant, that they could not possibly pronounce it. But to a Persian, any language must appear discordant and uncouth, in comparison with his own melodious tongue.

Those who are intrusted with the important charge of native education, in India, differ among themselves regarding the best medium of imparting this instruction. Some are all for English, as the only fit medium; and others hold that there is no necessity for teaching English to native youth; and that all useful education should be given in their own vernacular language. There is much to be said on both sides of the question; but for my own part, I incline to side with the advocates of the vernaculars. The object of education being gradually to enlighten the population

of India, at large; and to place knowledge within the reach of the people in general, the languages of the country must be employed in its diffusion; for it is not to be supposed that the great bulk of the natives of India will ever adopt the English as their own tongue, or find means or opportunity of acquiring it. New ideas may be communicated as well in one language as in another, and Eastern languages are, in general, neither poorer nor less expressive than Western. There are, of course, many things, such as objects in Mechanics and in the various branches of Natural Philosophy, for which no adequate terms may exist; but this is quite as often the case in English as in any Oriental tongue.

In all of our sciences, what vast numbers of words are introduced, which have been recently borrowed or manufactured from the Greek and Latin!—and which are quite unintelligible to any Englishman, unskilled in these tongues, who hears them for the first time. We carry this to a ridiculous extent. When a man now-a-days invents a new description of shoe-blacking or shaving-soap, he must needs get some schoolboy to devise for him a lengthy Greek name, whereby to advertise his new production. Several scientific works have appeared in Eastern languages, and I believe there are none which could not be made instructive by competent translation. In works of fancy, the case is very different. It would be a truly difficult matter to translate

many of our works of poetry and fiction into Persian, Arabic, or Hindee; and not less so, to turn many of their compositions of a similar description, into intelligible English. When science could be acquired, in Europe, only through the Latin and Greek, how very small was the number of persons who had any acquaintance with learning. It is an acknowledged fact, that however well a man may be acquainted with foreign languages, he can never read them with the same facility and satisfaction, that he can his own mother tongue, the language in which he thinks: and we may consequently take it for granted that a native of India, however great a proficient in English, will study and learn best in his own vernacular speech.

Some have asserted that heathen literature has always been the great prop of heathen religions, and therefore that the English language ought to be encouraged, so as to supersede native literature. I cannot acknowledge the soundness of this argument. Polite literature has never greatly upheld any false religion. The study of the classics never induced any English schoolboy to worship Jupiter; and if all the beautiful productions of the Persian poets were suddenly annihilated, their loss would not in the least degree tend to shake the stability of the Sheeah faith in Eerân. Literature has often proved obnoxious to the "unco guid" in all countries. Several of the wise men of the East have con-

demned all reading as dangerous and unholy, excepting the one book, the Koran — the only thing which they themselves knew anything about, or ever took the trouble to study.

The Roundheads in Cromwell's time, though they could boast of a Milton among their number, did their utmost to abolish and destroy polite letters; and their efforts only tended to injure their own good cause—for a good cause it was, in many respects, I must own, though sometimes a mistaken one —while their constant quoting and making use of Scriptural phrases on all occasions, only contributed to render the Scriptures disgustful and unpopular with the succeeding generation.

One piece of arrant absurdity has of late years obtained in India—namely, the printing of books in the native languages, in the Roman characters! Such books are entirely thrown away; for no native will read or look at them. The advocates of this preposterous system contend that it would greatly simplify the study of languages if all were reduced to writing in the same character. So perhaps it would: and it would simplify the matter still more, if all the East agreed to adopt the English tongue, and discard their own multifarious languages; but it would hardly be reasonable to expect that they should do so. To the natives, nothing can be more distasteful and unintelligible than this system: we might as well expect the English nation to adopt the plan of

Chinese symbols, as that the Hindoos should take to this Romanized print. Our Roman alphabet is moreover badly chosen for the purpose, as it is a very defective one; and by no means competent to the expression of an Eastern language, which contains many sounds unknown in English. As for simplifying the study of Eastern tongues by such means, I suspect that the learner, who will not take the trouble to acquire the alphabet of an Asiatic language, is not likely to make satisfactory progress in any other direction. The upholders of the Romanizing system may perhaps compel a few native boys, in their schools, to read their mother tongue in this queer disguise; but there is little hope that any one else will look at their books.

The prevalent notion that the Scriptures cannot be as well rendered and understood in an Eastern language, as in English, is entirely fallacious — at least as far as Mahomedan languages are concerned — indeed, I believe the reverse to be the truth. The Arabic enters largely into the composition of all of these, and its resources are beyond those of any other tongue. I am not well versed in Hebrew, but to this the Arabic is the nearest approach, and it is doubtful which is the older language of the two. The Arabic is by far the most copious; and if Mahomedans are to be believed, it was the original speech of mankind, in which Adam conversed with his Maker. In our English version, the word "Grace" pos-

sesses no less than eight different meanings — namely — the influence of God's Spirit — the Gospel dispensation — Salvation — Divine gifts, such as the power of prophecy, working miracles, &c. — Charity and liberality towards our fellow creatures — Pardon and remission of offences — Kindness and friendship — and elegance of form. On examining the Persian version of the Bible, I have found these several meanings expressed by six different words; while we use but one word to express them all. It will easily be conjectured which of the two versions is most liable to confusion and misapprehension. The same remark will apply to many other terms in Scripture, which in our Bible are somewhat ambiguous.* In the various languages of the Hindoos, the case is widely different; for in these, it is not easy to find intelligible phrases to express the attributes of the Deity. The Hindoo mythology is so differently constituted from the more solid and rational belief of the Moslem, that even the copious Sanskrit does not afford terms adequate to convey the meaning of much which, it is

* Our English Bible contains not a few mistakes, though none of any great consequence, which have been rectified in the Arabic and Persian versions. For example — In Genesis, xxxvi. 24. the words, which in the English are rendered "Anah that found the mules in the wilderness," are translated in the Persian and Arabic Bibles — "Anah that found springs of water in the wilderness." I might adduce other instances, but it would be needless to do so. Our Bible contains no error of sufficient magnitude to be of the least importance.

desirable, should be rendered as plain as possible.

With regard to Persian literature, it will be sufficient to say that it seems to be quite defunct, and has been so for centuries past. The works of the old poets and historians are still studied with avidity, but no writer of any promise of permanent celebrity, has appeared in recent times. It is a difficult matter to procure copies of the works of many of the famous authors of former ages, particularly the historians, for the poets are better cared for and preserved: and old manuscripts, finely executed, are very rare. The oldest I have been able to get, is a chronological work in Arabic, a singular production in its way, written in the year of the Hijra 707=A.D. 1307. I have of late been reading Sheeah theology, which is a very dry study indeed; but it is in some measure worth perusal, as we have little or no account of it in English.* Persian metaphysics are curious in their way, and still more absurd and visionary than any of our own, which is saying a good deal. Metaphysics is a study which I have always abominated: I never could peruse Brown's well-known Philosophy of the

* The two principal theological works of the Sheeahs are — the Hyât-ul-Koloob or "Life of our hearts," a work containing the lives and doctrines of the prophets, with the *osool* or true principles of the faith — and the Jâmi,e Abbassee, which explains the *foroo,a* or rules of conduct on all occasions. The term *osool* literally signifies "roots," and *foroo,a* "branches" springing from those roots.

Mind with anything like satisfaction, or even patience; and I believe it to be the best and most rational of all the numerous treatises on the subject. This branch of philosophy has always appeared to me, in vulgar parlance, "a bag of moonshine," founded in mere conjecture, and ending in bewildering doubt.

The Shah has contrived to make himself tolerably popular since his arrival; and the citizens of Ispahan, who looked for nothing but oppression and spoliation, have been agreeably surprized with a reverse order of affairs. The prime minister keeps the soldiery and retinue of the court in wholesome control; and though it is impossible to prevent occasional bullying and outrage, still these instances are but few. The shopkeepers in the city, however, complain of the soldiers as a great curse to them, most of the men being active thieves. It is a common practice for six or eight of these soldiers to come to a shop and examine all the articles for sale; and while one of the party purchases some trifle, the others steal everything they can lay their hands on. Should a formal complaint be made, and the theft proved against them, they would be most severely punished; but the shopmen are generally afraid to complain, knowing the uncertainty as to whether their accusation would be credited, and besides dreading the vengeance of the accused parties or their comrades.

On the 5th of August, the Shah visited Julfa,

and on the same day he was pleased to take unto himself a new wife; a proceeding attended with all kind of rejoicings in the city, at night, involving a considerable expenditure of gunpowder. The Shah has married three fresh wives at Ispahan, all within a fortnight. He possesses two real or *akdee* wives, while the others are all of the inferior or temporary order, termed *seegha* or *mutea*, where the contract is designed to last only for a short time; and when the "asylum of the universe" becomes tired of the ladies, he turns them away, or, as a mark of special favour and royal benevolence, confers them on some of his courtiers and nobles, as spouses to be highly honoured and appreciated. A pretty time these, thus distinguished individuals, must doubtless lead, with brides who have erst been the favourites of the "shadow of God upon earth," and are, in consequence, fully prepared to despise and look down upon any inferior dignitary! The Shah is encouraged in this kind of amusement, as much as possible, by his mother and the prime minister —they judging that the more he can be kept immersed in enervating pleasures, the greater will be the amount of power and influence, which they can retain in their own hands.

On the 18th of this month, the Shah held a review of his troops and a sham fight, on the plain before Sooffa; and afterwards diverted himself and the populace, by putting a number of people to death. About sixteen individuals

have been executed; a very moderate allowance, considering that his Majesty is bound to leave a favourable impression of his dignity and awful power, with his dutiful subjects at Ispahan, before taking his departure. Most of these persons were *lootees* of the city, and some were men who had been engaged in the outbreak that happened at Ispahan a year and a half ago. After the disturbance was quelled, these men had fled to Koom, and taken the *bust* (refuge) in the holy sanctuary of that town. The Shah, some time afterwards, promised them a full pardon, and granted them letters of *itmeenân* or free grace *, whereupon they returned home to their occupations, and have been living quietly, and without fear of future mishap, ever since. Now, in utter violation of his royal word pledged under hand and seal, the Shah has seized and put them to death! It may be argued, however, that his majesty was absolutely obliged, "à la mode de Perse," to make examples of a round number of persons, in order to secure the respect of his liege subjects, who would be sure to hold him in thorough contempt, if he quitted their city without performing a due amount of phlebotomy — and it was perhaps better that royal wrath should fall on the heads of those who had once been

* The word *itmeenân* literally means "security or peace of mind," and a letter of the kind here alluded to, conveys to the recipient an assurance that past errors shall be forgotten, and that he may dismiss all apprehension as to the future.

guilty of rebellion, than on those who had always been innocent.

It is impossible, indeed, to defend or palliate the breaking of a royal promise of pardon, save by the consolatory reflection that such things are done every day in Persia, and thought nothing of. There are many *lootees* in the city, who might have supplied the places of the poor pardoned rebels, with great advantage to the community; but all who could afford to pay—and the greatest villains are generally the richest—escaped all danger by handsomely feeing Cherâgh Alee Khan. The bodies of those executed were, according to custom, exposed for three days, at the foot of the *kâpook*, in the centre of the great Meidân in the city.*

The Shah is to leave Ispahan in the course of a very few days; and though he signified his intention to this effect, to his court, some time ago, he seems to be very averse to any speculation regarding the exact time of departure. Four days previous, a proclamation was bawled all over Ispahan, setting forth that all people of every condition, were forbidden to talk of, or to ask a single question regarding the Shah's departure, under pain of having their tongues immediately cut out! What the object of this stringent notice may be, I can form no idea.

If I were in the humour for gossip, I might

* This is a very old custom. It appears to be alluded to in Revelations, xi. 8, 9.

relate much more, which I have heard, relative to the Shah and his suite; but I have said enough. Stories of a semi-barbarous court can hardly be objects of interest to my few friends at home; and I am besides tired of my task, and shall conclude this letter, hoping shortly to finish my Persian Journal altogether.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Persian Wines.—Administration of Justice.—Leave Ispahan for Sheerauz. — Dihi Gerdoo. — Kooshki Zerd. —Ausepas. —Bahram's Grave. — Imaumzâdeh Ishmael. — Bees and Honey. — Mayeen.— Bendemeer. — Arrival at Sheerauz.

In the beginning of September, the weather became cooler; and though rather warm during the day, the glass, at sunrise, stood at 57°. At this time, fever and ague and bilious complaints were rather common at Ispahan, the usual effects of gormandizing fruit. Grapes were selling at four shahee *mans* for a keroonee, or at the rate of six pounds' weight for a penny. During September and October, wine is prepared: and a considerable quantity is made in Julfa. The grapes are trodden out in a large earthenware pan, and the whole crushed mass, juice and all, is stowed in a *khomra* or jar holding nearly twenty gallons; a small quantity of water is also added to it. After a few days, fermentation commences; and the mass is then stirred about every morning and evening with a wooden shovel, during a period of twenty or twenty-five days. At the expiration of this

space of time, the refuse sinks to the bottom of the jar; and the wine is drawn off and bottled in *kurâbas* or glass flasks. It is considered fit to drink about forty days after bottling, but most kinds improve greatly by keeping for a year or two. The best kinds are kept for seven years or longer. Spirits, I believe, are not distilled at Ispahan, but the date-brandy, made in the Germseer, is drank by many of the people. I have seen another kind of spirit, made, I have heard, in Azerbaijan, called *mâ-ul-hyât* or "water of life." It is a very strong and fiery liquor, distilled from orange-peel. It is singular that, in so many tongues, this vile pernicious liquor should bear the same name, however inappropriate. Eau de vie — usquebaugh — aqua vitæ — mâ-ul-hyât — all signify the same thing, and are applied to an ardent poison, which might, with greater show of reason, be entitled "water of death."

On the 28th of August, the Shah and all his court left Ispahan, on their return to the capital; and on the 5th of September, the British minister and suite took their departure. I was unable to quit the place, on my way southwards, for some time after, as I could not procure mules; every animal in the neighbourhood having been taken up by the numerous travellers to Tehrân. My own departure was consequently delayed for fifteen days after the British minister had gone.

Of judicial proceedings in this country, I have seen but little. The head of the law, at Ispahan,

is Mirza Hosein, entitled the Imaumi Joomah, or "spiritual leader of the Friday," as upon that day, he acts as *peeshnamáz* (leader of prayers) in the great mosque, and pronounces the *khootba* (sermon or exhortation). Some of the Sheeahs, I should observe, consider the Friday prayers, in the absence of the living Imaum, the invisible Mehdee, improper; as no one has a right to represent or stand in the place of that Imaum. Most, however, consider the Friday ceremony not only allowable, but right and proper. It is an established rule, that no two persons can officiate as *peeshnamáz* within a *farsakh* (four miles) of each other; and there is never more than one Friday orator in each town. Mirza Hosein holds his court in his own house, which is near the great mosque in the Meidâni Shah; and there he sits, surrounded by a number of *mohurrirs* (clerks or scribes).

I have previously mentioned the *shera* or statute law prescribed in the sacred writings, and the *oorf* or "lex non scripta," owing its binding force to general usage. The Sheeah code of jurisprudence is rather more simple than the Soonnee, employed in our courts of law in India, being less burdened with tradition; yet it might be rendered more perspicuous with advantage. I have always admired that excellent rule of the kingdom of Brobdingnag, which, as the veracious navigator Mr. Lemuel Gulliver informs us, ordained that no law should consist of more than

twenty-two words. Judicial forms, among all sects of Mahomedans, are very simple in comparison with ours. The tedious procrastination, which so often occurs in our English mode of procedure, is little known to them *: and as a Moslem pleads his own cause, he is not so liable to be preyed on by the swarm of locusts, that in England so often reduce a man to beggary. Forensic eloquence is not employed in their courts; and, in my humble judgment, so much the better: I fully concur in the opinion of the excellent Sir Matthew Hale, that if the judge and jury are men of sense, and understand what they are about, such eloquence is but waste of time and breath; and if they are weak and easily persuaded, it is but a decent mode of corrupting them, by bribing their fancies and giving a bias to their prejudices. The equality of all men is a doctrine inculcated in the Koran; but despotism and venality have, in a great measure, rendered the rule null and void. Influence and all-powerful gold, in this country, make laws inoperative, and rights unattainable; and most of the kazees and sheikhs scruple not to vend their judgments to the higher bidder.

On the 20th of September, I left Ispahan for Sheerauz. The caravan with which I was to travel, was assembled at Mahyâr, where it had been waiting for two or three days; and I quitted

* The Persians have a proverb—*nâhakki kootah bih az hakki dirâz*—"Speedy injustice is preferable to tardy justice."

the city in company with a Seiyid and two others. At Mahyâr, we found about twenty individuals with two hundred mules; and on the following evening, we all started together.

As far as Yezdikhaust, our route was that by which I had previously travelled, when coming up to Ispahan, and nothing more need be said about it. At Yezdikhaust I encountered, for the first time, a *kissa-goo* or professional storyteller — a character much the same as the "disour" of Europe in former days, when our warlike forefathers had no novels to read, and could not have read them if they had — who came to the caravansary to entertain the company. The person in whose house I had lodged here, nearly nine months previous, sent me a repast which was very acceptable. The principal dish was a *sheer-doon* or Persian haggis, made of the stomach of a sheep, filled with meat chopped small, rice, sweetmeat and spices, sewn up and boiled. It is not unpalatable, though it is but a poor apology for the "great chieftain o' the pudding race" of my native land.

Leaving Yezdikhaust, we proceeded by a route lying a little to the westward, and somewhat shorter than that by which I had travelled in winter, at which time this road is impracticable.

Our next stage was Dihi Gerdoo, distant eight farsakhs or 30 miles. The road, which lay through hills nearly the whole way, was stony and rough;

but not otherwise bad. Some years ago it was very dangerous, on account of numerous gangs of robbers, by which it was infested. Dihi Gerdoo, or the "village of walnut-trees"—so called, I presume, on the "lucus a non lucendo" principle, because there is not a single walnut-tree anywhere in or near it—is a poor and wretched-looking village, surrounded with a high wall of stones and mud. The caravansary lies outside of the village; a filthy miserable ruin, a very small part of which is inhabitable, most of the cells being roofless and choaked up with fallen stones. The proper name of the village, I fancy, should be Dihi Gird, or the "round village;" its shape being nearly circular.

A fine stream of water, full of small fish, runs through the place; on the banks of which are a few willow trees, the only trees in this vicinity. On the westward lies a range of bare mountains; and to the east extends a spacious plain, mostly covered with low brushwood and prickly shrubs. The cultivated portion of this plain is very small, and lies close to the habitations. The burying-ground, lying without the walls, is very large in proportion to the village; for the rude graves cover a space treble that occupied by the dwellings of the living. In former and more prosperous times, Dihi Gerdoo was probably much larger and better peopled than it is now. There is much marble in the rocky hills hereabouts. Among the rough stones composing the wall and cara-

vansary, I observed many fragments of fine white marble.

At night we proceeded on to Kooshki Zerd, distant seven and a half farsakhs. The road led over a large tract of level country, and was better than usual. Among my fellow-travellers were two *mustowfees* (revenue collectors) and several of their subordinates, who had been paying their respects to his Majesty. They amused themselves all night, on the march, in the exercise of *mushá,-era* or capping verses, a very favourite pastime of the Persians; and the quantity of poetry they will repeat is astonishing. There was a boy of eight or nine, a son of one of the mustowfees, who rode a pony by his father's side, whom I think I would back to repeat more verses than any dozen of "remarkably clever children" I ever met with in Great Britain.

Kooshki Zerd signifies "yellow palace;" and according to tradition, here formerly stood one of the famous seven palaces of king Bahram Goor, which that monarch erected in different parts of the country, and lodged therein his seven favourite ladies of surpassing beauty. In this yellow mansion, resided a Chinese lady who, on one occasion, mortally offended her royal lord by not sufficiently applauding his skill in archery, when, to exhibit his dexterity, he nailed an antelope's hoof to its horn with an arrow. Sir John Malcolm has related the story, illustrative of the old proverb, "Practice makes perfect," at length,

so I need not repeat it. He has informed us that he obtained the legend from some person in this neighbourhood, and does not appear to have been aware that it forms the subject of an episode in a well-known poetical romance.*

A large mound in the vicinity of the caravansary, marks the site of the once splendid Kooshki Zerd. It consists of a heap of ruins, covered with soil, and overgrown with grass and shrubs.

The caravansary, which was built by Abbas the Great, and is now sadly out of repair, stands in the middle of a vast plain, which is chiefly covered with the wild liquorice plant; a very small part of it being under cultivation. Two or three walled villages lie about a mile distant from the caravansary, but there are no nearer habitations. I observed a few patches of ground cultivated with the small species of millet, denominated *arzen* or *allum*.† There is plenty of game on this plain and the surrounding mountains.

I conversed with some of the villagers who brought our supplies. They complained much of the grinding rapacity of Feerooz Mirza, their governor, whose acquaintance I had made the year before at Sheerauz. The greater part of their crops had been destroyed by locusts, during the two past years, but no remission of taxes could be obtained, and they were obliged to pay

* The Haft Paikar of Nizâmee.

† Panicum italicum, called in India *chèna* and *kungnee*.

their rents in full, by which many of them were reduced to great distress.

The road between Dihi Gerdoo and this place, was formerly much infested by the Bakhtyâree robbers; but the exploits of these banditti have lately received several wholesome checks. Two months ago, some seven or eight Bakhtyârees were taken near this, by a body of irregular cavalry dispatched for the purpose by Feerooz Mirza, and conveyed to Sheerauz, where they were put to death.

At midnight we left Kooshki Zerd for Ausepas, distant six farsakhs. The road, which was rather rough and uneven, lay for the greater part of the way along the skirt of a chain of hills, with a swamp on the other side. Entering a defile in the mountains, we ascended a long and steep pass, overlooking an extensive plain, in the centre of which stands the village of Ausepas, with some green trees and cultivated fields around it.

Ausepas was, in former times, a place of no small consequence, and a large military station. It is now a scanty and poor village, built upon the slope of an artificial mound, upon the summit of which are the remains of an old fort, partly fitted up so as to be habitable, which goes by the name of Kasri Bahram, as it is said that one of Bahram Goor's palaces once occupied this spot. Around stretches the broad plain of Oojân, many miles in extent.

The crop growing near the village (there was none anywhere else) consisted of barley and Indian corn. An Eeliaut tribe was encamped hard by, to the infinite disgust of our muleteers, who love not the neighbourhood of these gentry, and vented not a few curses at the sight of their black worsted tents. An encampment of one of these wandering clans has, I confess, its charms for me; there is something so thoroughly patriarchal and Arcadian in the appearance of the group of low dark tents, their hardy independent inmates engaged in their various occupations, and their numerous flocks grazing on the pastures around: but those who convey valuable goods and cattle have little reason to admire their propinquity, for they are not famous for respecting the property of others.

I was lodged in a house recently built, and in consequence, tolerably clean. In the course of the day, the Eeliautees brought some carpets and other articles, which their women manufacture for sale. Persian carpets, of the finest sort, are considered the best in the world. The material is more durable, the colours more permanent, and the pattern more tasteful and elegant, than those of any other carpets fabricated in the East or West. The best are made at Yezd, and being very expensive, few are manufactured except to order. One sign of a good carpet is, that the under or wrong side should exhibit the pattern nearly as distinctly as the upper. Another test

of excellency of texture is, to place a piece of red hot charcoal upon the carpet, for a moment, till it singes a brown spot: the burnt surface being brushed off, not the slightest trace should remain to show where the charcoal was laid.

In the afternoon, I went to see a remarkable spot called Bahram's grave—a part of the swamp which occupies the greater portion of the plain—for, according to tradition, this monarch, who was an inveterate sportsman, while hotly pursuing a wild ass, plunged into the morass, and met with the fate of the Master of Ravenswood. An Eeliautee conducted me to the place, which is about half a mile distant from the village. Here are several dark and very deep pools, surrounded with tall reeds. These pits were dug, as the legend goes, by the mother of Bahram Goor, in hopes of recovering the body of her son, which, however, was never found. They are full of fish, which the Eeliautee told me he had caught in quantities, by the unsportsmanlike trick of stupifying them with some drug, which he called *mergi mâhee* or "fishes' death," thrown into the water. This drug, he described as the seed or berry of a plant growing in the hills: I suppose it must be the cocculus indicus. Persian historians differ regarding the death of King Bahram Goor; for in some chronicles, including the Shah Nameh, he is stated to have died a natural death, after a long and prosperous reign of sixty-three years.

The greater part of the valley of Oojân is swampy, and covered with long grass and reeds. Wild hogs are very numerous here; and there are not a few lions, which commit great depredations among cattle. I observed a very pretty species of Arum growing in quantities on the plain; having a bright purple spathe enclosing a black spadix.

About an hour after sunset we resumed our journey; and the caravan moved on briskly for the first few miles, in order to get beyond the reach of the much-dreaded Eeliauts. The road skirted the plain of Oojân for about fifteen miles, and we then crossed the swamp by a good substantial bridge, lately built by the Eelkhânee or chief of the nomadic tribes; and passing a ruined caravansary, where formerly stood a village, now in ruins, entered the hills, and ascended a mountain pass, which, if not as steep and dangerous, was quite as rugged and difficult of travel, as any of the *kotuls* between Bushire and Sheerauz. On the top of the pass, the caravan halted for half an hour to recover breath; fires were kindled of the brushwood and dry shrubs growing around, and the kaleons—the indispensable refreshment of a Persian—passed from hand to hand. We then descended into a valley, where lies the village of Imaumzâdeh Ishmael, a neat and clean-looking cluster of houses, surrounded with a stone wall having small towers at intervals, in the midst of which rises the high-

domed sepulchre of Ishmael, a son of the seventh Imaum, Moosa Kâzim.

This village, which contains 200 houses, is seven farsakhs from Ausepas. It pays no revenue to government; all the lands, &c., attached to it being considered *wakf* or consecrated property *, on account of the sanctity of the shrine which it contains. My horse and self being a little tired, I determined on remaining here all the next day; while the caravan pursued its route to Sheerauz, leaving behind my own mules, with two or three persons who were also disposed to halt for a day. There is no caravansary at this place; so I was accommodated in a good and clean house, where I found the people very civil.

The inhabitants of this small settlement are said to be very good-looking, and the report does them no more than justice. Few of the women wear veils; and some of those whose faces I saw, were decidedly pretty. The wife of the owner of the house in which I lodged, was one of the best

* The terms *wakf*, *owkâf*, and *mowkoofât* denote bequests or legacies for pious purposes, and all of what we should call "church property." These may be lands, tenements, sums of money, furniture, books, or any valuables; and they are held sacred, pay no tax, and cannot be attached by the crown or courts of law. The revenue derived from all *wakf* property, is expended in the maintenance of the sacred place, any school or college attached to it, and in salaries of the moollahs and others there resident. This revenue is managed by the chief moollahs, and much peculation and malversation will always prevail.

specimens of a Persian female I have seen. She sat, during the greater part of the day, on the *sukkoo* of the house, rocking her baby's cradle and smoking her kaleon.

Vines are extensively cultivated in the vicinity of the village, and a considerable quantity of raisins and *sheera* (grape treacle) made, but no wine. Honey is another product for which this place is famous. The Persian method of managing bees and obtaining the honey, is curious enough to demand some particular mention. The hive is a tube of wickerwork plastered with clay and cow-dung, about three feet long, and eight or nine inches in diameter of the calibre. Each end is closed with a round piece of board or tile plastered in, and one of these doors has a small hole in the centre, to admit of the egress and ingress of the bees. About the middle of May, or shortly before the sun enters Gemini, these cylindrical hives are packed on mules or donkies, each animal carrying six or eight of them, and transported to some locality where the shrubs and plants, which bees are fond of, grow in greatest abundance. This is commonly some sequestered valley among the mountains. Here the hives are piled in small pyramids, of three or four rows (the lower row consisting of five or six hives, and the upper of two or three), and one or two persons are left in charge of them. In the latter part of October, or as the sun is about to enter Scorpio, the hives are transported back to the

village, before the frost sets in, and kept there till the ensuing spring. When the honey is taken, the bees are first driven to the further end of the hive, by blowing in smoke*: the door is then taken out, and the honeycombs cut out and removed, leaving a small quantity as food for the bees during the winter. In this way, any quantity of honey may, at any time, be obtained, without injuring a single bee. In winter, the hives are kept, arranged in the pyramidal form, in the yards of the proprietors' houses, and covered with straw and mud, to defend them from the effects of frost and rain. This system of managing bees prevails in other countries of the East: I have seen similar hives in Syria.

The Persian peasantry I have always found remarkably civil and obliging. Whenever I have inspected their fields and gardens, and desired information regarding their agricultural operations and such matters — as I have been in the habit of doing very frequently — I have invariably experienced much courtesy, and a willing readiness to show and explain to me everything I wished. This is the more worthy of note, as such

* They have an apparatus for this purpose, consisting of a small earthenware cup perforated in the sides with numerous holes. Some straw and dried cow-dung are put into this and lighted: then, by blowing in at one side, a cloud of smoke is propelled from the other. This smoke does not in the least injure the bees or taint the honey.

is not usually the conduct of peasants in most other parts of the world. The higher classes, particularly such as hold situations of any importance under government, are on the other hand, notwithstanding the boasted urbanity of Eerân, by no means disposed to be courteous or obliging to any one, to whom they dare exhibit a different style of demeanour. In the presence of their superiors, or in any case where their interest demands it, they can be deferential and polite to a servile degree; but otherwise they generally comport themselves like true jacks-in-office, in an insolent and overbearing manner; presuming and taking liberties as far as they can venture with impunity. Their arrogance is, however, easily checked; for it is mere bluster and vapouring, without any firmness of purpose. The kindly and civil disposition of the poorer classes, induces one to regret the more, the miserable state of despotism and wickedness in which they are trained up. With a good religion, and under a good government, they would be excellent people.

Our next stage was Mâyeen, distant not more than three farsakhs. The road lay through a narrow valley bounded by ranges of huge rocks, which having traversed, we came upon the plain of Mâyeen, a fertile spot, watered by numerous streams. The village is situated in the midst of fine gardens, vineyards, and groves of trees; rendering it one of the very few really pretty spots

I have seen in Persia. The habitations do not, however, correspond with the beauty of the environs, for the village is a filthy place, and the people a squalid ill-favoured set. The caravansary here is in ruins, and as I did not fancy the appearance of the dirty houses and their dirtier inmates, I took up my quarters in a garden, under the shade of some fine old walnut trees. The flat roofs of nearly all the houses were covered with quantities of large black grapes, drying in the sun for raisins.

At a little distance from the village, was an encampment of *doozd-bigeer* (thief-takers), including a khan and one hundred horsemen, posted for the purpose of apprehending robbers, who are at times pretty numerous on the roads. Whenever the khan hears tidings of a robbery having been committed, or any thieves having been seen, he sends a detachment in pursuit of the delinquents; and these, when taken, if they are not rich enough to buy themselves off by a suitable bribe, are sent to the governor at Sheerauz to be summarily dealt with. These horsemen will themselves rob travellers, when they can do so without likelihood of detection: they levy unauthorized taxes on all passing caravans, by way of protection-money; and tyrannize severely over all of the neighbouring villagers, who consider them an infinitely greater curse and nuisance than the thieves whom they are sent to suppress.

At night we left Mâyeen, and went on seven farsakhs to Dihbeed * on the plain of Mervdasht, little more than a farsakh distant from the remains of Persepolis. We entered the plain by the northern bank of the Kom-feerooz river, passing between the high insulated rocks of Istakhar and Shahrek, upon the summits of both of which are the remains of ancient castles. I now much regret that through carelessness or indolence, I neglected to visit these remarkable sites. The first has frequently been inspected by travellers, but I am not aware that any European has ascended the rock of Shahrek. Both of these rocks rise abruptly from steep hills standing out upon the plain, and their height has been reckoned at about 1200 feet. The fortresses upon their tops are said to have been erected by the famous Dilemee prince of southern Persia, Azud-ud-dowlah.† Morier, who visited the summit of Istakhar, describes the remains of the castle as consisting of part of a gateway, the ruins of several towers and walls, and four reservoirs for water.

Dihbeed is a large substantial village. It possesses no gardens, and there are no manufactures; but the people keep a great number of cattle, and

* This name, signifying "village of willows," is common to many places in Persia. I have mentioned one on the winter route to Ispahan.

† Azud-ud-dowlah ruled over Fars and Irauk from A.D. 977. to 983.

cultivate a considerable quantity of millet and maize.

Instead of going direct to Sheerauz, I resolved on visiting the village of Bendemeer, which has been described as a pretty spot by Morier and others; so next morning, after a parting look at Jemsheed's throne, with its strange sculptures and stately columns — which in all human probability I shall never behold again — I crossed the plain in a south-easterly direction, and reached Bendemeer a little after midday, the distance being about three farsakhs from the Takhti Jemsheed.

After all that has been said regarding this place, I own I was much disappointed with it. Bendemeer is a large, straggling, dilapidated village, built on both sides of the river, and comprising about 120 inhabited houses, and many more in ruins. Its revenue amounts to 200 tomâns annually. There are no gardens, and very few trees, and the surrounding scenery is bleak and ugly. South of a village rises the lofty, abrupt rock, which goes by the name of *nakkâra khonehi jemsheed*, or "Jemsheed's band of music house:" it has no remains of any building upon it. The *bund* (dyke or embankment) after which both river and village have been named, extends across the river, damming it up so as to throw a great body of water into numerous channels irrigating the surrounding country, and is 120 yards in length, and six yards broad on the top; gradu-

ally increasing in breadth lower down, so as to form an inclined plane, over which the river pours in a small cascade. Above this *bund* is a bridge of thirteen arches, through which the water flows, connecting the separate portions of the village. The *bund* is of stonework, and the bridge above of brick and stone; the latter is in a very dilapidated condition, and, if not soon repaired, will become impassable. This was constructed nearly nine centuries ago by Azud-ud-dowlah; and the long time it has lasted bears evidence to the excellence of the structure; for I much doubt if a single shahee has ever been expended on its repair. The Bendemeer river flows into the great salt lake of Bakhtegân, above forty miles distant to the eastward. More than twenty small water-mills are situated immediately under, and at the sides of, the *bund*, keeping up an incessant humming noise, the only sign of industry in the place.

The people here seem to be a stupid, witless set. With the fine water-power they possess — and in this respect they are better provided than in any other place I have seen in this country — they might have gardens, vineyards, and "bowers on the bank of the calm Bendemeer" to any extent, but for their indolence and apathy.

Here I met with a noble from Sheerauz, out on a hunting excursion, who, with his numerous attendants, was encamped on one side of the vil-

lage. With a condescension, not usual among this class, he invited me to his tent to partake of his repast, which he washed down with a pretty liberal allowance of the forbidden liquor. He was going into the hills to look for the *goor-khur* (onager or wild ass), which description of game is becoming rather scarce hereabouts. The wild ass is a wary animal, and exceedingly swift of foot: it is sometimes shot, but more commonly hunted with relays of men and dogs, as it was in the time of Xenophon. I have never seen it.

The Persians are the only Asiatics I know, who can be considered real sportsmen. They are fond of the chase, of its excitement, toils, and dangers; and they can fully enjoy it, riding as hard, and fagging as hard as any English foxhunter. Field sports in India are really enjoyed only by Europeans there. In the great hunting parties of the Indian nobles, the principal personages do nothing but look lazily on: the numerous vassals drive and slaughter the game, while the magnates themselves lie in a state of supine indolence, half asleep, in the howdas of their elephants. An Indian nobleman is generally a perfect specimen of sloth and effeminacy; sunk in a stupified state of repose, from which it is difficult to awaken him. The Persian, though fond of dissipation, is by no means slothful: he rides much; takes a good deal of exercise, and is often no mean performer in athletic sports. He is commonly de-

bauched and profligate, but rarely effeminate and sluggish.

Finding that I had been many years in India, my entertainer inquired particularly regarding the occult arts, which he supposed were practised with great success in that country, and with which, he doubted not, I had made myself fully acquainted. He owned himself to be a dabbler in alchymy, and would hardly believe me when I assured him that we rejected the art as futile and absurd. Many of the Persians entertain a notion (how arisen I know not) that the natives of India are peculiarly skilful in the sciences of alchymy and magic, and that many of them are in possession of the grand secret of transmuting baser metals into gold. Persians are, in general, firm believers in the philosopher's stone, and some continue to hunt after that phantom, as eagerly as the alchymists of Europe were formerly wont to do. That devious science came originally from the East. Gheber in Arabia, and Bu Alee Seena in Persia *, were the fathers of the system pursued by Albertus Magnus, Raymond Lulli, Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, and other erring philosophers of the West. The labours of European alchymists were, however, attended with

* Gheber, or more correctly Jâbir, was an Arabian physician, who lived in the beginning of the third century of the Hijra. He is said to have written not less than five hundred works, nearly all of which are now lost, and probably no great loss to science. Bu Alee Seena I have before mentioned.

some beneficial results, as many of the most valuable discoveries in chemistry were made while seeking after the transmutation of metals.

Next day I went to Zargoon, hardly two farsakhs distant from Bendemeer; and on the following, arrived at Sheerauz.

CHAP. XXXV.

Sheerauz. — Travelling Equipment for Persia. — Necessity of a Knowledge of the Language. — Miscellaneous Remarks on Moslems in general. — Persian Servants. — Shah-nameh-khoon. — The Shah Nameh. — Ferdousee. — Mahmoud of Ghiznee.

My task is nearly finished. I have already described Sheerauz and the route to Bushire, and have little more to say regarding this country, of which I have seen enough to satisfy my curiosity, and which I shall not be sorry to quit. Travelling in Persia is at first amusing by its novelty, and, in the society of suitable companions, might never become irksome; but all alone, or with none but Persians, I must confess I have at times felt weary and dispirited.

The traveller in this country should carry with him as little baggage as possible — this may be set down as a general rule, applicable in every case. He should have a Mackintosh air-bed, which is much preferable to a common mattress, being more portable, and impervious to moisture, so that it may be laid on the damp ground, without the least danger — a couple of *lahâffs* or quilts,

made of chintz quilted with cotton, which supply the place of bedclothes — one or two small carpets — an English saddle and bridle — a Mackintosh waterproof cloak — a double-lined umbrella, to defend him from the sun in hot weather — a telescope — and a gun and pistols; for every one travels well armed, and besides this, game is often to be met with on the road. He may, if he thinks fit, dispense with a chair; but if he dislikes the custom of sitting on the ground, as I do exceedingly, a folding camp-stool should form part of his moveables, and one of his chests will serve for a table.

He should also have a curtain to hang up at the entrance of his cell in the caravansaries, to keep out the wind and cold, and prevent his being too much stared at; for these cells have no door. The best thing for this purpose, is a piece of carpet or other thick heavy stuff, eight feet long by four or five broad, with strong loops sewed along the edges; and half-a-dozen large nails or iron spikes, to knock into the wall for the suspension of this curtain. He must not omit to have a small *mangal* (or brazier to burn charcoal in) in winter, as the cold is no trifle—and a fan or flyflap, in summer, to keep the flies off his face; for in the hot weather, these insects are numerous enough to be exceedingly troublesome—and at all times, a *matára* or a *doolcheh** for water; as this

* The *matára* is a large flask made of Bulghar leather, with a wooden mouth and stopple: it holds two or three quarts.

indispensable element is not always to be found, and when found, is often quite undrinkable. As I have before stated, an Englishman ought to wear his own costume, in preference to the Persian dress.

My travelling attire has generally been a Tweed shooting-jacket, Cape of Good Hope deerskin trousers, waterproof boots, and a Persian cap. For walking, especially when clambering up hills, the most agreeable covering for the feet is the cloth-soled Persian shoe, which I have before described; but in cold or wet weather, stout English shoes are preferable. Vermin are not as numerous or as troublesome, in this country, as I had supposed. Musquitoes are at times annoying, but they do not abound as in India. Scorpions and snakes are said to infest many places, but I have not seen any. A large formidable-looking spider, called the *roteil*, makes its appearance in summer: its bite is venomous, but not dangerous. The black and yellow-striped English wasp is common in the gardens, as well as a large reddish hornet, well known in India. Flies are too plentiful to be pleasant, in summer; but fleas and other more objectionable insects are not by any means

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The *doolcheh* is also made of leather, shaped like a cone. The upper and smaller end is the mouth, which is stopped with a wooden plug; and it has three wooden stays or legs, running down the sides, the ends of which raise the broad bottom of the vessel, two or three inches from the ground. It holds a gallon or more.

as numerous in Persia as in some other countries I have visited.

A knowledge of the language is, in this country, indispensable. In all countries it is highly desirable; but in this, I do not know how any one could get on without it; for no Persian knows a word of any European tongue. In Turkey, Egypt, and Palestine, the servants, and many others, have a smattering of English, French, or Italian; and it is not absolutely requisite that the traveller should be acquainted with the language of the populace — but such is not the case in Persia. In every place, ignorance of the speech of the people takes away at least one-half of the pleasure of the tour; and the traveller, to enjoy himself properly, should possess, not a mere smattering sufficient for ordinary purposes, but a good knowledge, and an ability to converse fluently with every one and on every topic.

The old troublesome custom of making presents to the headmen of towns and villages, where the traveller halts, is now fortunately falling into desuetude. This used to be a heavy tax on all tourists, the English especially, from whose generosity, much was sure to be expected. It often happens that persons bring the European stranger trifling presents, such as trays of fruit or sweetmeats, in hopes of getting a "quid pro quo" in the shape of a round sum of money; but with proper instructions to one's servants, these may easily be avoided.

In Persia, one is not troubled with beggars; in which respect, this country affords a complete contrast to the regions about the Levant, where almost every one begs. With the exception of derveeshes, fakeers, and other sanctified impostors, who are permitted by custom to prey on the public, I have seen no mendicants, save a few blind, maimed, and diseased folks. Some one (Sir John Malcolm, I think) has justly remarked that there are fewer beggars in this country than in any other: and I believe I never encountered fewer, even in the United States of America.

Persia, as far as I have seen of it, is a particularly ugly and uninteresting land. A dismal uniformity pervades the whole country, reminding me of South Africa; but there is an aspect of neglect, ruin, and misery throughout, which the Cape Colony did not manifest. Everything here seems to be crumbling to decay as fast as possible, and from its general appearance, one would suppose the unhappy land to be lying under some stupendous and overwhelming curse! Were I to draw, in a few words, a picture of Persia, from what I have seen, I should describe it as a vast dreary desert intersected with huge chains of bare, sterile mountains—the soil, in some places, bearing stunted shrubs, and in others, teeming with saltpetre—here and there, at long intervals, where water is to be found, green spots with fields and habitations—the towns and villages, few and far between, consisting mostly of heaps of dismal

ruins, enclosing and nearly concealing the inhabitable portion * — no fine buildings to be seen, except a few old palaces and edifices falling in ruins for want of repair — the streets of the towns, narrow dusty lanes between high mud walls, which conceal any appearance of comfort and elegance which the houses and gardens within may possess — the roads through the country, mere tracks, which, in the vallies, are tolerably level and easy, and in the mountains, rugged and unsafe — the lodgings for travellers, comfortless caravansaries, generally more or less ruined, and always more or less filthy — the people mostly civil to strangers, but not to be trusted or believed in the least particular — the climate consisting of a pleasant spring, a very hot summer, an unhealthy autumn, and a cold winter; a very dry atmosphere and clear sky: some rain in spring and autumn, none in summer, and a good deal of snow in winter.

I have often thought, with some degree of

* Mr. Baillie Fraser speaks of Persian towns as "shapeless masses of ruins and filth." The description is laconic and correct. It is difficult to account for Sir J. Malcolm's mention of the "splendour and magnificence" of these towns; unless by taking into consideration that Malcolm was received in this country in the best possible manner, and conducted through it with all honours, and consequently saw everything "couleur de rose." Mr. Fraser travelled, as I have done, as a private individual, and viewed things in their more sombre colours. Splendour and magnificence there may have been in the time of the Suffavean kings; but assuredly there is nothing of the sort in the present age.

wonder, on the singular position which the solitary English traveller occupies in this country. Alone, with no countryman of his within a hundred or two hundred miles; among a people who detest his creed, and bear no good will to any European; who are reckless of human life and suffering, and are restrained by no moral principle; having with him no guard or protection of any sort; yet he is in no danger, he finds the people commonly civil and obliging; and can travel from place to place in perfect security. Robbers are numerous in many parts of the country, but on the great public routes, they are too well watched to be venturesome, and they do not often meddle with Europeans. Travelling, in remote and little frequented parts, must always be unsafe, unless with some guard or escort; but as long as the European tourist keeps to the principal routes, I believe he may (except in cases of popular outbreaks) journey from one end of Persia to the other, without meeting with the least disagreeable adventure, unless he makes one for himself, and lays himself out for hostility, by some exhibition of bullyism, petulance of temper, or those diverting John Bull frolics, which savour too much of horse-play to be relished by most people.

Though polite as far as outward show goes, the English traveller need not expect to find the Persians by any means kind or hospitable; unless he happens to be a man in authority, or in other

way of consequence, in which case they may present some show of hospitality in order to conciliate his favour. The strong abhorrence with which they all (with few exceptions) regard infidels, and Franks in particular, combined with their innate meanness and selfishness of character, will effectually bar every sentiment of liberality and kindness towards strangers. As a general rule, the Christian need never look for anything like genuine disinterested hospitality, among Mussulmans of any class or country; and he will never receive a single instance of it, unless it be in the rude tent of a wandering Eeliaut or Bedouin Arab. The Persians are a lively and inquisitive people, and when they find a Frank who can talk their language, they are glad to kill time by having a chat with him; and will show so much politeness, and make so many unmeaning protestations and friendly offers, that a stranger, unacquainted with their real character, might be disposed to think them half in earnest. All this, however, means nothing: and their civility will go no further than words, or acts that involve neither trouble nor expense. Malcolm and Brydges have painted the urbane side of their character far too highly. It was all very well for these gentlemen, and others like them, who came hither as accredited envoys of their sovereign to the Shah, and to whom everybody was ordered to show respect; who travelled through the land with regiments at their heels, and all

kinds of pomp; and who carried loads of presents to distribute with both hands. They, no doubt, found the people, one and all, disposed to treat them with the greatest civility or servility (in the East these are the same) wherever they went; but with private individuals the case is widely different—as it is, in some degree, all the world over.

The European can never be intimate, even with the few Persians who are content to receive him as a visitor, without considering themselves greatly defiled thereby. By compliance with their customs and manners, he may be received on certain distant terms of acquaintance, but any approach to intimacy is entirely out of the question. A Mahomedan is forbidden by his religion to form friendship with any unbeliever; and the Sheeah, in particular, is taught to class the Christian with pagans and idolaters, who are utterly unclean, and whose very touch is contamination. An Englishman and a Moslem can have few ideas in common. Their opinions and tastes are so essentially different, that on any near acquaintance, they will be mutually disgusted with each other. The blunt straightforward manners, plain unvarnished speech, and surly self-sufficiency of the former, will be as odious to the pliant obsequious Asiatic, as the utter want of truth and principle, the fawning hypocrisy, and abominable vices of the latter, will be to the Englishman.

A partiality for Mahomedan languages and

literature induced me, during a period of several years, to cultivate the acquaintance, and to see more of the character of Moslems, than my countrymen would generally care to investigate. I am now tired of the pursuit, and I do not hesitate to declare my conviction that in the Mahomedan character there is, upon the whole, something to admire certainly, but a good deal to pity or despise, as one may feel inclined, and not a little to abhor and detest. In this estimate, I am aware that I differ from some of our writers on Eastern matters, who have discussed the subject with far more ability than I can pretend to — Messrs. Lane and Urquhart, to judge by their writings, seem to prefer the society, customs, and character of Moslems, to those of their own countrymen — a preference which I can explain only by having recourse to the trite old saying, that "there's no accounting for tastes." An Englishman, newly arrived in a Moslem country, may easily conceive, at first sight, a prejudice in favour of the people. The novelty of the life and scenes, the new customs and ceremonies, the showy costumes, and the easy conciliatory politeness which the supple Mussulman well knows how to exhibit, all combine to exert a favourable influence on the stranger's mind. But these first impressions wear off, and, in process of time, the mind receives a new accession of feelings. It is now more than sixteen years since my acquaintance with Mahomedans commenced; and I be-

lieve that the Englishman, in ninety-nine cases in every hundred, will coincide with me in his opinion regarding them; when he has become well acquainted with them, knows their languages, and has had experience in their ways.

Civilization and improvement, in these benighted lands, are so slow, and so obstinately resisted by the religious prejudices of the wretched people, that centuries may elapse ere there is any amalgamation of ideas and sympathies between Eastern and Western nations; unless it may please Providence to interpose in some signal manner, such as we cannot anticipate, to dispel the Cimmerian darkness that attends *Islâm*, and overshadows wheresoever this false faith obtains, by the Gospel light of Truth. That the generality of Mahomedans are sincere in their religious profession, cannot, I think, be doubted; though there is also much hypocrisy among them — particularly among Persian Sheeahs: but their creed is one which does not tend to improve humanity, and chiefly shows itself in outward ceremony, Pharisaical scruples, an abundant admiration of themselves, and a hearty hatred of every one else.

After my own experience, my advice to any one about to travel in Persia would be briefly this — Go somewhere else, or stay at home — for after all, even if this beggarly wilderness of a country were easier of access than it is, and travel in it more convenient and expeditious, there is really

very little to repay the trouble of visiting it; and the tourist will be infinitely better amused and instructed, in other more accessible lands.

There remains a word to be said respecting Persian servants. These domestics have been commended by some Europeans; but from what I have seen of them, I will not hesitate to pronounce them to be, in my opinion, decidedly bad. They are very inferior to the Arab domestics, whom one procures in Egypt and Syria. I have found the Arab dragoman honest, zealous and willing, and always thankful for any little favour granted — while the Persian is knavish and false, indolent, and destitute of zeal and good will in his employer's service, always trying to evade his duty as much as possible, apt to take impertinent liberties, and never showing the least gratitude or thankfulness for any amount of favour. I have not seen a really good, smart, and active servant in this country; and I never heard of any becoming attached to their employers, or earnest in their service.

An Arab servant, when kindly treated, will often become much devoted to his master; even when that master is of a nation and creed which he has been taught to regard with aversion: but I believe that no extent of kindness can win the regard of a Persian. His heart is enclosed in a crust of selfishness and deceit, which nothing can penetrate. He may become, in some degree, attached to the house which shelters him, the easy

routine of duties he goes through daily, and the benefits he acquires; but he would not wet his foot to save his master from drowning. Natives of India are not remarkable for gratitude, devotion, or unselfishness — but in perfect freedom from all such unprofitable virtues, the Persians far surpass them.

Though fond of ease and idleness, Persians can be wonderfully active when required. It is astonishing what journies their couriers, both mounted and on foot, will make, and what exertions they will go through. The *kâsid* (running footman), who carries the mail between Sheerauz and Bushire, performs the journey, on foot, in three days. This is fully fifty miles a day, over the roughest possible road.* When I was at Ispahan, a *gholâmi chaparee* (mounted courier), attached to the British Mission, rode from Ispahan to Tehrân, thence to Hamadan and Kermanshah, and back to Ispahan by the same route — altogether a journey of more than 1200 miles over none of the best of roads — in ten days. He was thirteen days absent, having been obliged to wait three days at different places, to get his dispatches. This man, from long and continual usage, had acquired the faculty of sleeping in the saddle, as his horse was going on at the usual courier's pace, an unvarying canter; and on a journey of this kind, he never halted night or day, except for a few minutes to swallow a

* I have heard of a footman running 100 miles in a single day.

cold meal. He changed horses, at the different stations, five or six times a day. These couriers do not live long; exertions of this nature being sufficient to wear out the strongest constitution.

At Sheerauz I found myself again in the society of some of those whom I had known during my former residence there. I cannot say that I experienced much pleasure on renewing their acquaintance, for the company of Persians had, by this time, become sufficiently irksome and distasteful to me; but as I hope soon to leave the country, without much probability of ever revisiting it, I consider myself privileged to employ the hours that are left, in seeing as much of men and manners, as circumstances will admit of. It was with a feeling of more sincere joy, that I found a packet of English and Indian newspapers and letters waiting my arrival; as some considerable time had elapsed since any news had reached me from the East or West.

One evening, at the house of an acquaintance, I was entertained with a *Shah-nameh-khoon*, or reciter of the Shah Nameh — a professional character who attends people's houses for the purpose of reciting aloud, and acting (as it may be termed) passages and episodes of Ferdousee's great poem. Of this description of entertainment the Persians are very fond. I had previously, at Ispahan, heard one or two of these performers; but this man, who was a Gabr (fire-worshipper) from Yezd, was considered a very superior artist.

He possessed a powerful, clear, and melodious voice, and chanted the fine poetry with great emphasis, accompanied with appropriate action. At times he worked himself into a positive frenzy.

Every different kind of verse—whether heroics, anacreontics, elegy, satire, &c.—is recited in an appropriate tone or chant. That of the Shah Nameh is expressive of *niheeb* (awe or terror). The Persian soldiery, when about to engage in combat, are accustomed to sing aloud certain passages of this epic poem, which practice has the effect of inspiriting them to absolute fury; as the verses of Homer did the warriors of Greece, or as the runic lays of the Skalds were wont to animate the fierce Berserkars of old Norway.

The Shah Nameh, the great epic of the East, is a historical poem, comprising a romantic history of the kings of Persia, from the commencement, until the conquest of the country by the Moslems. It is supposed that Ferdousee collected together all the legends and traditions of the ancient people of his native land, and upon these tales founded his poem, which contains some small portion of truth, hidden under masses of fable. The veracity of this romance is, however, not questioned by most of the Persians, who regard Ferdousee's work as genuine and authentic history. The Shah Nameh is one of the longest poems in the world, and contains not less than 120,000 lines: I have, nevertheless,

had patience to wade through it, though I was nearly a year and a half amusing myself with the task. The style is very simple, but so antiquated and full of obsolete phrases, that a glossary is as needful to a modern Persian, as to an Englishman who reads Chaucer. A great deal of the Shah Nameh is extremely beautiful; but much of the subject is wildly extravagant, and bears no small resemblance to some of the Welsh romances of King Arthur's court, with which Lady Charlotte Guest has favoured the public. I have often thought it a pity that we have no English version of the Shah Nameh. A Mr. Champion, late of the Bengal C. S., translated, or rather imitated, in verse, a portion of it, but his effusions are very tame and spiritless. A good version of a poem, in another language, can only be made (if it can be made at all) by one who is as good a poet as the author of the original, and who understands his language thoroughly.

The immense length of this metrical romance has generally been found fault with; and I have little doubt that had it been confined to one half of its bulk, it would be better appreciated. In this respect, it resembles my old favourite, the Faerie Queene, whose only fault is its unmerciful prolixity. The Shah Nameh is never read in India: for though copies of the work are not uncommon in that country, no one makes any legitimate use of them. A heroic poem is not to the taste of the dreamy lethargic Indian.

Ferdousee has been justly styled the Eastern Homer — much of his poem bearing no small resemblance to the rhapsodies of the old Grecian bard — and if fastidious critics have objected to the too frequent introduction of dæmons and supernatural beings, in the Persian epic, I do not see that this is any greater blemish than the perpetual interference of the gods, of which Homer is so fond. Ferdousee has also been censured for too great diversity of matter and incident; but I am of opinion that this variety is infinitely more charming than the successive — council of gods, a feast, and a fight — a fight, a feast, and a council of gods — which imparts to the Iliad, a sameness rather apt to be tiresome. Homer degrades his gods to something far beneath the level of his men — who are truculent ruffians at best — Ferdousee's heroes are much more like gentlemen, and his dæmons and genii behave as such characters ought to do. The entire mythology of Homer, and of most of the classics, is outrageously absurd and irrational, and far more revolting to common sense and decency, than anything to be found in the Shah Nameh. But to confess a preference for Ferdousee to the disparagement of Homer, must needs be, I suppose, a heresy amounting in turpitude nearly to high treason — so I shall say no more. Besides, I have forgotten my Greek.

Copies of the Shah Nameh are often very valuable, when finely written, illuminated, and ornamented with pictures illustrative of the striking

events in the poem. These fine copies are now becoming rare; as the work has been printed in a cheap form, both in India and at Tehrân, and will probably never be transcribed again. Through the carelessness of copyists, the Shah Nameh, in process of time, became much corrupted by errors, interpolations, and omissions; so much so, that no two MS. copies are exactly alike, and it is difficult to conjecture what is genuine and what spurious. On comparing three MSS. of this poem, which I possess, I seldom find them agree together for twenty consecutive verses. Eastern literature is indebted to the late Major Macan of the Bengal army, for an excellent edition of the Shah Nameh, compiled from a number of the oldest and best MSS., and which was published at Calcutta about twenty years ago.

Ferdousee, in common with most Persian authors, is somewhat addicted to extravagance and hyperbole. This, to a certain degree, has always been considered allowable in epic poetry, but the Persian rhapsodist avails himself of the privilege to an unlimited extent. Such trifles as the sun and moon trembling on beholding a fierce battle, the earth quaking, mountains longing to flee from their station, and rivers to be diverted from their course, need hardly be noticed, so many of our own poets having indulged in similar extravagancies: even the greatest and most gifted of all whom the sun ever shone upon, is not free from this blemish — take for example Hotspur's

account of the battle between Mortimer and Glendower * — and if the Swan of Avon can occasionally descend to rhodomontade, who will venture to cavil at Ferdousee or any lesser genius? Amadis de Gaul and Lancelot du Lac were mere children in comparison with some of the heroes of the Shah Nameh, who carry maces of a hundred *mans* weight †, and make no more of routing a whole army of foes, aided by dæmons and monsters dire, than Don Quixote did of scattering a flock of sheep. Chronology is much disregarded in the poetic imagination of Ferdousee — for example, he makes out Alexander the Great to have been a Christian! but when Shakespeare makes Hector of Troy quote Aristotle, and indulges in a few trifling anachronisms of the same kind, we must not animadvert too severely on the bard of the Shah Nameh.

Abul Câsim, surnamed Ferdousee, was born at Toos in Khorassan about A. D. 932, and resided at the court of the renowned Sooltân Mahmoud of Ghiznee, where he was engaged for more than thirty years in composing the Shah Nameh, or "Book of Kings." For this vast poem, Mahmoud had promised him a munificent reward, as a remuneration for his labours; but like many other votaries of the muses, Ferdousee was doomed to disappointment. The Sooltân's prime minister,

* First Part of Henry IV., Act I, Scene 3.

† What the weight of a *man* might have been in Ferdousee's days I know not, but the weapon in question was no doubt a formidable one.

who was the poet's bitter enemy, over-persuaded his royal master, and instead of the promised gold, a quantity of small copper coin was sent to Ferdousee. Fired with indignation, the poet gave away the money on the spot, and having withdrawn from court, gave vent to his resentment in a most cutting satire on his former royal patron. This piece of invective has been pronounced, by Sir William Jones and others, to be a noble satire; and it is said that Mahmoud would have given half of his dominions to have had it recalled. I must say I am disappointed with it. It is little else than a series of bitter complaint and personal invective, without point or wit. It at least possesses the negative merit over most other satires of Eastern poets, of containing no very virulent or indecent abuse. Oriental rhymers do not shine in the satirical line of poetry: their sarcasms are seldom anything else than a tissue of stupid vulgar abuse, and obscene scurrility.* Some years afterwards, Mahmoud repented of the injustice he had done to this prince of poets, and sent him the whole reward originally promised, with a dress of honour; but the amends arrived too late: Ferdousee had died a few days before the king's messengers reached his abode.

During the many years he spent at the court of Mahmoud, Ferdousee had been a great favour-

* I must except the Hindostanee poet Souda, whose satires are excellent, but sometimes not very delicate.

ite of this ambitious monarch. The reciter of the Shah Nameh told me an instance of a happy piece of flattery on the part of the poet. One day the Sooltân was playing at backgammon with some of his courtiers, and when he particularly wished to throw sixes, threw aces instead. Mahmoud, according to the prerogative of Eastern princes on such occasions, waxed wondrous wroth, and might, in all probability, have soothed his choler, by making the head of some unfortunate bystander atone for the fault of the contumacious dice, when Ferdousee, who was looking on, exclaimed, "The dice came up sixes, according to the wish of the monarch of the universe; but when they found themselves in the presence of the asylum of the world, they turned their faces to the ground." The anger of the Sooltân was calmed at once, and he ordered that the mouth of the poet should be filled with pearls!

Ferdousee spent his last years at Toos, his native place, and died when nearly eighty, of good old age; so that notwithstanding the neglect and disappointment he had endured, he could not be considered a victim of disgrace; still less could he lay claim to being dubbed a "martyr of genius." I cannot understand or appreciate this grandiloquent phrase, which the biographers of certain ill-behaved bards of our own times are so fond of using, unless "genius" is to be taken in the sense of follies, vices, and misconduct of every description. To judge from the biography

of a celebrated author of the present century, it would seem that when a gloomy and morbidly discontented rhymer takes upon himself to outrage every moral and religious sentiment; sets decency at defiance in his life, as well as in his writings; makes parade of his evil passions, by way of evincing a hatred of hypocrisy; lives a comfortless hypochondriac; and dies at last, shunned by those whose affections he had wantonly spurned, he ought, forsooth, to be canonized as a " martyr of genius ! " Eastern poets are treated of in more rational terms by their friends and historians. They die of old age or disease, are put to death, or drink themselves to death; but their transcendant "genius" never has the credit of their martyrdom.

The poet Jâmee, in his account of Ferdousee's life, concludes the detail of the Sooltân's ungrateful treatment of him, by asserting that future ages will remember Mahmoud only for this act *; but Jâmee was wrong — the bloody conquests and spoliations of the stern Sooltân of Ghiznee, who could afford to decorate his hounds with collars of the jewels of plundered India, have left traces enough to perpetuate his name for

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* برفت شوکت محمود و در زمانه نماند
جز این فسانه که نشناخت قدر فردوسي

" The glory of Mahmoud hath vanished from the world, and left no trace behind, save this one record — that he knew not the worth of Ferdousee."

ages yet to come — to say nothing of the famous gates of Somnat,h, which he had appropriated, and about which, a late sapient Governor-General of India has made a noise and parade, absurd enough to furnish "argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest for ever."

CHAP. XXXVI.

Sheerauz.—Persian Women. — Polygamy. — Divorce.—Female Morality in the East.—Festival of the Sacrifice. — The Moharram.

Hitherto I have said little or nothing regarding the fair sex in this country; and though my knowledge of Persian ladies is merely information derived from hearsay — for I have never had an opportunity of crossing the threshold of a *zenâna*, and probably never should have, if I lived here all my life — I feel that it is incumbent on me to say something concerning them. Women of the villages, and many of the lower ranks in the towns, have little scruples at conversing with a stranger; and many, even of the middle or more respectable orders, are not so shy as might be supposed. The mother and sister of my landlord at Sheerauz often came to my quarters, to talk with me, and generally laid aside their veils: and when I walked on the roof of the house, the women in the neighbouring houses used to come up to stare at me, and were not particular about concealing their faces, when no one else was looking on. Ladies of rank are, however,

far removed from the ken of ordinary mortal men. Abroad they are closely veiled, and sometimes guarded by attendants; and at home, no one of the other sex beholds their faces, save their husbands, fathers, and young brothers.

The dress of a Persian female consists of a pair of immensely wide trousers, like a couple of petticoats tacked together, made of silk or cotton, and fastening round the middle by a running string — a very short chemise of gauze, reaching only to the waist —a *koordee* or jacket reaching to the hips, having open sleeves, which may be buttoned close if required — an *arakcheen* or small skull-cap upon the head — and sometimes a *chár-kudd* or handkerchief, thrown over the head, and descending on the shoulders and back. A variety of ornaments are worn, but not in the profusion which Indian women are so partial to*: these consist of rings, bracelets, necklaces, and earrings of different sorts; and usually a *jeeka* or aigrette springing from a band encircling the head.

Their hair is arranged in *zoolf* or large side locks, and *gees* or long plaited tresses hanging down behind. It is usually brought down low upon the forehead, which is certainly not a becoming fashion. They paint their eyelids at the edges, with *soormeh*, a kind of collyrium, made, I believe, of ore of antimony; and smear the eyebrows with

* The extravagant fondness for baubles, entertained by Indian females, has caused a wise Pundit of Hindostan to remark that if the nether-millstone were a gem, his countrywomen would hang it round their necks!

khattaut, a sort of black paint. Little patches of some black substance are occasionally applied, to set off the countenance, as used once to be the fashion in Europe: and they endeavour to make the eyebrows unite; such being considered a great beauty of feature.

The attire in which they are to be seen out of doors, is simple and uniform. This consists of a large mantle, called a *châder*, of dark blue cotton stuff, enveloping the whole person from the crown of the head down to the feet. Where this *châder* is drawn over the head, it is bound round with the ends of a piece of white cotton, called the *roobundeh*, which falls over the face, down in front; and opposite to the eyes of the wearer, a small piece of network is inserted in this face-veil, enabling her to see clearly. The legs and feet are protected by *châkchoor* or long cloth stockings; and a pair of high-heeled slippers, or clumsy boots, completes the out-of-door costume. In this attire, the women are all exactly alike, and no person can recognize his own wife or mother in the streets; but the lady can see everything distinctly. The same sort of disguise is worn by all women, high and low; though many of the latter, particularly in the villages, are less scrupulous about exposing their persons; and walk abroad, without mantle or veil of any kind.

The life led by Persian ladies is listless and indolent, and to any civilized woman would be

insufferably monotonous and insipid. Their duties are the superintendence of household affairs, and the care of their children; and their amusements consist in visiting their female acquaintances, and receiving their visits in turn; witnessing the performance of female dancers, singers, and story-tellers; playing in the gardens of their houses; smoking, and eating sweetmeats. Some play on the guitar or other instrument; and some are adepts in the arts of needlework and embroidery: most of them are skilful cooks and confectioners. They visit the public baths on certain days of the week, when men do not go thither; and perhaps their greatest enjoyment is to meet at these resorts, to bathe together, smoke, and talk scandal.

Persian women are not generally good looking, as far as I can judge from what I have seen. I should say they were inferior to the men in appearance. The usual characteristics of their countenances are, a round flat face with little expression in it, large black eyes, heavy eyebrows, and a low forehead; the latter defect being heightened by the practice of wearing the hair low upon the brows. I have seen some pretty faces among them, but not many. Though Persian females wear no kind of stays, or other unhealthy contrivance for compressing their waists, a small waist is greatly admired.* Their notions

* In Jâmee's celebrated poem on the adventures of the patriarch Joseph; when describing the charms of the fair but

of beauty are not dissimilar to our own, and are certainly more refined than those of some other Orientals. The lady's eyes should be like those of an antelope, large and dark; her eyebrows united, and resembling, in shape, an unbent bow; her ringlets like the noose of the warrior or hunter (an instrument similar to the "lasso" of the modern Mexican, now no longer used in this country, but a favourite implement of the warriors in the Shah Nameh); her figure should be erect, tall and stately as the cypress tree, for Persians "hate a dumpy woman" as much as Lord Byron did—but here let me stop—I do not possess the delicate pen of Miss Pardoe, in depicting the charms of Eastern ladies—besides which, I labour under the disadvantage of not having seen any of the better class, who, we may suppose, are finer specimens of feminine beauty than their humbler unveiled countrywomen.

Europeans are mistaken in entertaining the general notion that Oriental wives are mere slaves or pieces of furniture; that they are ill treated

frail Egyptian lady who loved the Hebrew youth, among other beauties, he mentions the following—

نیارستی کمر از موی بستن
گران موی بودیش بیم کستن

"It was not possible to bind her waist even with a hair,
Lest the hair should cause her slender middle to break."

A pretty extravagant idea; but sufficient to show the estimation in which a slim waist is held.

by their liege lords; cooped up in prison-like harems, and denied every liberty and enjoyment. On the contrary, the husband is usually very indulgent to his wife; consults and takes her advice on matters of every description; and is, not unfrequently, completely ruled by her: for I am told that the noble arts of henpecking, coaxing and worrying, are fully as well understood, and as often practised, by ladies in this country, as by their fair sisters in any quarter of the globe. To mix in the society of men, and to walk abroad with the face exposed, are indelicacies to which no Eastern lady would submit. They have no notion how any female of reputable character can allow herself to be stared at by every man she may happen to meet. Out of doors, the lady enjoys almost unlimited liberty. She may attend the baths and mosques, at times when the men are not there, whenever she pleases—she may go and visit her parents and female acquaintances, staying at their houses for some days if she chooses, without giving her husband any previous warning of her intentions—and she may have her own visitors at home, and entertain them in any way she likes—while her better half cannot interfere or even show himself. The husband cannot venture into the wife's apartments, without giving notice; and she will refuse to admit him, if she has visitors, or does not choose to see him. It has been asserted that the women in Mahomedan countries enjoy, in reality, more liberty than

English ladies do; and I believe the assertion may be partly correct.

Every zenâna is a little kingdom in itself, wherein the lady or chief wife is the sovereign; and from whence, her influence and machinations affect the outer world at large: for it is a fact that many plots and intrigues, both trifling and serious, have been concocted in this sanctuary. The lady rules here with undisputed sway; rewards or chastizes her female domestics, as she thinks fit; and treats them just as her lord does his male dependants in the outer chambers.

In point of education, women of this country are very far behind those of civilized lands; but it is a mistake to suppose that none of them can read or write, for many can do both. The arts of reading and writing do not, however, constitute education; and these being turned to no beneficial end, the ladies are brought up in deplorable ignorance. If the proper respect and degree of consideration with which the gentler sex is regarded be a just criterion of the civilization of a people, the Persians are far back in the scale of enlightenment. Though the women often possess great influence over their husbands individually, they cannot be said to have any place in society, or to impart any tone to the morals or manners of the community. They are mostly terrible intriguantes; and having no small share of evil passions, pride, and ambition, they incite their lords to all manner of mischievous schemes, but seldom

exert any beneficial sway over them. That the most creditable and honourable qualities of men are greatly promoted and fostered by the humanizing influence which well-educated women maintain in society — as exemplified in civilized Christian lands — is an argument which a Persian has not yet learned to comprehend or appreciate.

Every Mahomedan is, by his religion and law, permitted to have four wives. These are, in Persia, termed *zeni akdee*, or "lawfully wedded women;" but there is also an inferior kind of marriage in fashion here, called *seegha* or *mutea*, whereby a man is entitled to wed any number of wives he pleases. This inferior contract is only temporary, and may endure for years, months, or even a single day, as may be agreed on; at the expiration of which time, the parties may separate for ever, or renew the union as they shall think fit: and this connexion is not considered at all disreputable. In Morier's Hajji Baba, the chief moollah of Tehrân (a character drawn from life) is represented as a great trafficker in these temporary unions, between all chancecomers and women of any description; for the sake of the fees which every man pays for the performance of the ceremony — a mode of turning the penny, about as honourable, and perhaps as profitable likewise, as Pope Sixtus IV.'s licensing the brothels of Rome. The Soonnee Moslems do not approve of this inferior kind of marriage, but they allow of concubines being kept, in addition

to the regular wives. At the expiration of a *mutea* union, the woman ought to wait for some weeks, previous to marrying again, in order to ascertain whether she is likely to be in the way that ladies wish to be that love their lords; but they generally evade doing so.

Herodotus informs us that the ancient Persians were proud of a large family; and that the king used to send annual presents to those who were distinguished by the number of their children. In like manner, a number of sons is now a great source of pride; but daughters are little cared for, and no man is congratulated on the birth of a female child. The ratio of increase of population in Persia is very small, notwithstanding the allowed plurality of wives: and this I believe to be the case with every Mahomedan nation. Christian communities, where one wife only is permitted, be she fruitful or barren, increase far more rapidly.

The generality of Mahomedans have but one wife. Though I doubt the truth of Dr. Johnson's assertion that "no man can have two wives, but by preventing somebody else from having one," I fully believe that no man can have two wives, without finding that he has got one too many. Persons of rank or wealth commonly have their four lawful helpmates, besides a host of temporary spouses, who are maintained more as a piece of state, and necessary appendage to a great man, than for any other purpose, and must constitute

a source of no small annoyance and anxiety to their lords.

Persian girls are generally married at the age of fourteen or fifteen: I have heard Persians condemn the detestable Indian practice of marrying a girl when a mere child. Here, as in other Mahomedan countries, a widow is at liberty to marry again. In India, most Mahomedans have foolishly adopted the Hindoo prejudice against widows taking a second husband; and consequently should the first husband die, the widow, however young, is condemned to wear out the remainder of her existence, solitary and neglected.

When a young man's parents determine on providing a wife for their son, they fix upon the daughter of some family whose rank and circumstances are on a par with their own. The negociation is carried on by the female relatives of the parties, neither of the young couple being consulted on the occasion. The consent of the parents having been obtained, the various arrangements are discussed and settled.

In former times, the happy pair never beheld the faces of each other, till the whole had been concluded, and the bride conveyed to the house of her future lord and master; but now-a-days, a change for the better has come into fashion, and the young couple are often permitted (sub rosa by ways of, for the parents pretend to know nothing about it) to have previous stolen inter-

views with one another, and are allowed the option of accepting or refusing their future partners for life. This more rational and sensible innovation is, I believe, peculiar to Persia, and does not prevail in any other Moslem country; nor is it by any means general here. Between the agreement of the parties, and the wedding-day, an interval of two or three months usually occurs, during which time the betrothed pair are occasionally permitted to meet. Neither bridegroom nor bride are present at the tying of the knot; but each party employs a *vakeel* or proxy on the occasion. The bride is always conveyed to her lord's house at night, when she is mounted on horseback and attended by a great crowd of the friends and acquaintances of both families, with music, torches and flambeaux, making a prodigious noise. The bridegroom receives her near his own door, and she is conveyed into the inner apartments; upon which the friends all take their leave. A good deal of feasting and jollification always accompany weddings, which render them very expensive amusements.

The property of a married woman continues her own. The husband has no control over it, and it is not liable for his debts.

Divorce is easily managed among Mahomedans, their law on this point being somewhat similar to that of the Jews.* A man may divorce his wife,

* Vide Deuteronomy, xxiv. 1, 2, 3.

if "it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes," on almost any pretext; and he must then repay the lady's dowry; but when the wife sues for a divorce, as sometimes happens, the dowry is not paid back. Divorce is always considered a far greater disgrace to the husband than to the wife; which circumstance undoubtedly contributes to check its frequency. A man may divorce his wife twice, and take her back again, should he rue his too hasty sentence; but after turning her away for the third time, he cannot take her back, until she shall have married some other party, who has subsequently died, or divorced her. While we condemn the facility with which repudiation of marriage is obtained in Mahomedan law, we must admit that the great difficulty and expense attending it, according to British law, is equally, if not more, censurable. In England, a divorce is an expensive luxury, which the wealthier classes only can afford. A rich man may free himself from a faithless spouse, by paying heavily for the privilege: the wife of a poor man, who cannot afford an Act of Parliament, may be an infamous character, but her unfortunate better half cannot legally get rid of her. They manage these matters better in the United States of North America; and also in Scotland, where divorce is a civil remedy, sought from and obtained by the judgment of a competent court.

In Moslem countries, divorce never takes place for adultery; as the wife is, as well as her para-

mour, then pronounced to be *wájib-ul-katl,* or "worthy of death;" but capital punishment is, in this case, rarely if ever inflicted. To prove the crime of adultery, Mahomedan law requires four witnesses; and if the accuser cannot support his allegations by the requisite amount of evidence, the charge is a somewhat hazardous experiment; for the crime of *kazf,* or falsely accusing a married woman of adultery, is looked on as one of the most heinous offences a man can commit.

Rival wives are generally deadly enemies; and in the *anderoons* of princes and grandees, poison is often employed by the ladies, to remove successful competitors for their lord's favours.

Women of Persia possess none of the innate delicacy, refined feelings, or sweetness of temper, which characterize the ladies of England. From all I can learn regarding them, it seems that they are commonly haughty, impetuous, and unaccustomed to control their violent passions. They have little or no idea of decency; and when they have power and opportunity, can be as imperious and cruel, as they are represented to have been in ancient times. The proud, merciless, and ambitious spirit of Parysatis, Roxana, and Hamestris, now animates many a Persian female bosom, as fiercely as of yore. Lady M. Wortley Montague has made mention of various amiable qualities in Turkish women, and I have heard her report confirmed by an English lady, whom I knew in

Egypt, who had spent many years in Constantinople. Uneducated as Turkish and Levantine females are, I believe that much good feeling and kindness of heart exist among them; and many of them are really ornaments to their sex. From all I have heard, Persian women must be of a very inferior stamp. They are said to be completely selfish, quite destitute of generous feelings, insensible to kindness, but very revengeful, and never so happy as when engaged in intrigues and mischief.

One of the most disgusting features in their character is their love of cruelty—odious enough in a man, and infinitely more so in the gentler sex. I have been assured that when an execution, or other brutal and bloody spectacle, takes place, the women crowd to witness it, taking a savage delight in seeing an unfortunate individual put to death or mutilated. Their want of proper education, and the faulty way in which they are brought up, must account for this absence of feeling. The noble and dignified Roman lady was accustomed to attend exhibitions of gladiators, and to take pleasure in witnessing a spectacle of a hundred or more human beings butchering one another in a bloodstained arena, as an amusement of the most refined and agreeable description—and the modern Spanish donna will visit a circus with equal glee, for the purpose of seeing an unfortunate bull speared to death, after having gored and ripped up half a dozen fine

horses, and perchance killed a man or two, to enhance the piquancy of the entertainment. A love of cruelty for cruelty's sake is a horrid passion, and, it is to be hoped, rarely implanted by nature in the human breast. Milton could not portray Satan himself as absolutely cruel! — he ruins our first parents, not for the mere love of causing their misery, but out of revenge towards their Maker.

The morality of Eastern females may generally be rated at an inverse proportion to the care taken for preserving their virtue intact; and the ladies of this country, if no worse, are certainly no better samples of feminine modesty and purity, than any of their Moslem sisterhood. A Persian acquaintance with whom I was speaking on the subject of life and manners in the *anderoon*, told me that, with the exception of the women of the Eeliautee tribes, there were few chaste wives. Though infidelity is punishable with death, the law is little else than a dead letter; and many husbands who are fond of intrigues, do not scruple to allow their wives a similar liberty. The facility of intrigue is greater, in this country, than one might at first suppose: a lady may go out when she pleases; and shrouded in the disguise of her *chάder* and *roobundeh*, she may pass her own husband unrecognized, and go where she likes, without much fear of detection.

This unfavourable character of the fair sex of Eerân has been given from the report of others,

but I have no reason to doubt the truth of it. Enough has been said on a not particularly agreeable subject.

The sixth of October happened to be the Eidi Korbân or Festival of the Sacrifice, said to be held in remembrance of Abraham's intended offering up of his son — Ishmael, as Mahomedans will have it. On this occasion, every family kills one or more sheep, and quantities of mutton are distributed to the poor. A camel was sacrificed at the Mosella near the cemetery of Hâfiz, with a great deal of absurd ceremony; and the carcass, having been cut in pieces, was divided among the spectators.

I had not been many days at Sheerauz before I was seized with a malignant fever — always fearfully prevalent here during autumn — which very nearly brought my Journal to an abrupt termination; and for more than a month, my condition was a somewhat precarious one. Fortunately for me, Dr. F., the Swedish medical officer in the service of the Shah, was in the city, and to his care I am indebted for my present prospect of recovery. This illness has happened inopportunely, to upset sundry plans I had formed of visiting Baghdad and other places; as well as to dissipate a fine stock of health I had laid in during my previous rambles: I trust, however, that I feel duly grateful to an Almighty Providence that has vouchsafed to support me, and to protect my life through this and other perils.

The re-establishment of my health must necessarily be slow; and I have resolved on leaving Sheerauz as soon as I am able to sit a horse. A change of air is the most beneficial restorative in such cases, and I intend to lose no time in finding my way to the coast.

Towards the end of October, the Moharram festival commenced. This feast is of ten days' duration, during which time, the people appear to go mad. Men and women go about clad in dark-coloured garments, to represent mourning, weeping bitterly, beating their breasts, and occasionally tearing their clothes.

The Eidi Moharram, namely, the first ten days of the first month of the Mahomedan year, constituted a religious festival of the pagan Arabs, previous to Mahommed's time; but these days are now held sacred, to commemorate the martyrdom of Hasan and Hosein, the sons of Alee. The principal day is the tenth and last, called the *áshoora*, or more commonly, *roozi katl* (day of massacre), as on this day, Hosein was slain at Kerbela. Many persons fast during this day.

In various parts of the city, were erected *takiyas* or temporary theatres, roofed with canvas; in which was represented a kind of dramatic performance, celebrating the melancholy fate of these holy personages — a style of drama much akin to the religious shows, denominated Mysteries and Moralities, once common in England; and, as in these shows, the female parts are acted by boys.

This drama consists of ten acts, one of which is performed on each night of the festival. I was invited to attend the *takiya* of the Hâjee Kowâm, said to be the best in Sheerauz, but excused myself on plea of illness, for I was then suffering from diurnal attacks of fever. In any case, I should not have accepted the invitation: the performance is professedly a religious one, and is regarded as such by the Mussulmans; I have, consequently, great doubts of the propriety of any Christian countenancing such ceremonies by his presence.

The Sheeahs of India have not this dramatic exhibition; but during the Moharram, they perform all manner of absurd antics, which probably answer the purpose equally well.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Return to Bushire.—The Cholera.—Nâsir Khosrow.—Reeshire.

On the nineteenth of November I left Sheerauz, still very weak from the effects of fever, and travelled by easy stages to Bushire. I have already described this route, and need say nothing further on the subject. No frost had yet appeared at Sheerauz when I quitted the place, but in the hills it was freezing hard at night. This, however, did not extend as far south as Kauzeroon.

The cholera morbus had been bad at Bushire, and had also appeared in several places on the road. The people of Sheerauz were much afraid of its making its appearance there; for in that close dirty city it has generally been very fatal. This epidemic, dreadful as it is, has seldom any terrors for an Indian. All who have resided in India have learned to look on the cholera, as Burns's poor folk regard their imminent "poortith cauld"—

> "They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
> The view o't gies them little fright."

I had no companion on the road, save one

Persian who was going to Kauzeroon. He had been in India, and had seen something of the world, being besides in some little degree accustomed to the society of Europeans. He asked me to state what I thought of this country, having now travelled through the land; but this was a subject on which I did not think it necessary to be explicit. He had met with some other English travellers in former times, and was much scandalized at the way in which they had all concurred in abusing Persia. "Why should they call it a beastly wilderness? did not God make it?" I thought of Johnson's reply to Boswell, under similar circumstances, but did not choose to imitate the rudeness of the Doctor.

Talking with him once about the Soofee sect, he told me that Soofeeism had always existed in this country, from the earliest ages; and had formerly been much more unpopular than in modern times, and greatly persecuted, not only by the authorities and moollah-hood, but by all who claimed to be orthodox Moslems. In illustration of this, he related an anecdote which, though hardly worth repeating, I shall write down, in default of better matter. There once lived an Ispahanee poet named Nâsir Khosrow, who was a friend and companion of the famous Bu Alee Seena (Avicenna). He was a thorough Soofee, and his poetry, which is still extant, though strikingly beautiful, was so completely tainted with heresy, as to be abhorred by all

good Mussulmans. Once while travelling, he had occasion to pass through the city of Balkh; and one of his boots happening to be cracked, he stopped at the stall of a cobbler to have it stitched up. As the man was about to commence the job, a great uproar was heard in the street at a little distance, and the cobbler ran to see what was the matter. In a few minutes he returned, and Nâsir Khosrow observed that he carried a small bit of raw flesh stuck on the point of his awl. On asking him what had happened, the mender of soles replied that an ill-advised youth had been wicked enough to recite publicly in the street, some of the infamous verses of that detestable heretic Soofee, Nâsir Khosrow of Ispahan, whereupon the righteous and high-minded people had very properly cut him to pieces on the spot; and he himself, as a highly meritorious deed, had cut a fragment from the impious wretch's body, which he had stuck upon his awl. At this pleasant intelligence, the poor Ispahanee poet nearly fainted, but summoning up what presence of mind he could command, he told the cobbler that he really could not think of stopping a moment in a city where such poetry as that of Nâsir Khosrow was known or heard of: and forthwith took his departure, without waiting to have his boot mended.

At Kauzeroon, I halted for a day to rest myself. The cholera had been very severe there, a month previous, but had nearly disappeared. The differ-

ence of the appearance and character of the people, as one travels southwards, is as perceptible as that of the climate. The men of the Germseer, if not as good looking as the more northerly Persians, have a more independent bearing and swash-buckler demeanour. Their lawless mode of life, and the constant frays in which they are engaged, teach them to depend each individual on himself, and serve to develope a degree of freedom of action and conduct, not usual among better organized communities.

At Dâlikee, I found that my last year's therapeutic exertions, in connection with Holloway's pills, were by no means forgotten; and I was again solicited to enact the part of the mock doctor, but unfortunately my small stock of pills had been exhausted long before.

The Moslems obtained what knowledge of medicine they possess, from the Greeks. The Abbasside khaleefas employed Grecian physicians, who introduced the systems of their ancient sages. Many of them now suppose that Europeans are able to work miraculous cures, through the aid of the Messiah! It is singular that in India, where we are best known, our medical skill is least trusted. The wretchedly ignorant and superstitious people have not that reliance on European medical skill, which in other Eastern countries is evinced implicitly, and eagerly made known.

Most of the natives of India are shy of calling in the aid of the English doctor; and he is not

commonly sent for till the prayers and juggling tricks of the village Brahmin have utterly failed, and the poor patient is on the point of dying of a disease which, if properly treated at the commencement, might easily have been cured. The white doctor is then requested to come, as a last resource; and with this request, an active and benevolent man will never refuse compliance, although he knows that he renders his services gratis. He comes then, to find that he has been sent for too late to be of any use, and that the patient is reduced to the last extremity, by a course of treatment, the most absurdly injudicious that could be devised. In no case need the good-natured doctor expect his directions to be followed, or his word relied on.

Nothing can be imagined more trying to the patience of a medical man in India, anxious and willing to do good among the native population, as many of the Company's surgeons are, to their honour and credit be it said, than the wrong-headed perverseness and duplicity of the natives; whose conduct, on such occasions, is sufficient to test the temper of Job. For example — a native, male or female, suddenly falls ill; and one of the relations of the family, gifted with more sense than the rest, goes and begs the English doctor to come — this is generally done in direct opposition to the wishes of the rest of the family. The doctor accordingly pays a visit, and perhaps finds the patient in a violent fever, shut up in a little

close box of a room, which is crowded to suffocation with as many natives as can contrive to squeeze into it, stifling hot, and reeking with all manner of obnoxious smells. The first thing he does is to turn everybody out, except one or perhaps two of the family — he next directs the sick person to be removed into a cool and airy place — he then writes his prescription, and sends it to his apothecary for medicine — imparts often-repeated instructions regarding the way in which the physic is to be administered — the absolute necessity of fresh air and quiet — that the patient is not to be disturbed or incommoded by visitors — and various other matters, all of which injunctions the family solemnly promise to observe — and takes his leave for the present. As soon as his back is turned, the whole shoal of friends, relatives, and idlers, who had been turned out, flock back again, with their number probably augmented by the addition of sundry other acquaintances. The doctor's instructions are canvassed, and voted utterly preposterous, and not to be thought of. The poor patient is hustled back into the little room again, which is crowded more densely than ever. By the time the medicine arrives, some conjuring Brahmin has persuaded the family (for the unlucky patient is not consulted) of the utter inutility, not to say infinite danger, of taking anything from the hands of an impure stranger, a white man: and that certain oblations and offerings of money, made to the

idol which he patronizes, will certainly insure their friend's recovery — or some poisoning ignoramus of a native physician has prevailed on them to reject the white infidel's medicines, and to apply such remedies as he shall provide — the result of which sage advice is, that the doctor's medicine is thrown to the dogs, and the unhappy invalid consigned to the tender mercies of those, whose treatment is calculated to shorten his life as rapidly as possible.

When the doctor pays his next humane visit, he is surprized to find that the drugs he prescribed have not produced the usual effects — for the patient's friends, of course, protest that they have been duly administered. He sends for more; repeats his instructions, and goes away. The same mode of procedure is repeated, and the same tricks played, again and again: and at length, when the sick person is past all hope of recovery, the doctor discovers that he has been deceived and trifled with all along. The patient dies, and the family and friends are informed by the Brahmin or native quack, that the misfortune is owing entirely to their folly and guilt, in permitting the white doctor to come under their roof; and that had they chosen to seek their relation's cure, from the first, in the good old orthodox fashion, he would now be living to gladden their hearts. And with this cheerful piece of intelligence, they are left to console themselves as they best can.

At Bushire, I found myself once more under the hospitable roof of the Resident. My health had improved slightly on the road, and I am now fast recovering strength.

The cholera appeared at Bushire in August, and was at first severe; about thirty deaths occurring daily. Altogether, upwards of 500 persons have died of it; but much of this mortality must be attributed to the unskilful mode of treatment, adopted by the Persian and Arab pretenders to medical science, and which consists in immersing the patient in a tank of cold water, or continually pouring jars of cold water over him; obliging him, at the same time, to swallow quantities of vinegar, limejuice, and other acids. The disease disappeared in October. There exists, at present, a good deal of smallpox in the town. Vaccination is practised, but many of the people entertain a strong prejudice against it; and those who do not, have a superstitious notion, which in a great measure prevents the use of it among them — namely, that to take matter from one child's arm, in order to vaccinate any others, deprives that child of all the beneficial effects of the operation. I have heard that this absurd and injurious idea has prevailed among some of the uneducated classes in Great Britain and Ireland.

Bushire now has a more cheerful appearance, than it wore when I was last here. Those who disturbed the peace of the station are now dispersed or quieted, the inhabitants have all re-

turned, and trade flourishes. Sheikh Hosein had been residing on the island of Carrack, since his retreat from hence, where he and his followers oppressed the people grievously.* An attempt was lately made, by some persons commissioned by the governor of Bushire, to take him; but he contrived to make his escape, and has fled towards Bussora, taking refuge with some of the Arab tribes on the banks of the river. His cannon and military stores all fell into the hands of the governor's emissaries. The Tungistoonees have tendered their allegiance to the government, and covenanted to keep themselves quiet in future.

I accompanied the Resident, one day, on a visit to the governor of Bushire, who is a son of the Hâjee Kowâm of Sheerauz, and is usually styled *derya-begee*, or "lord of the sea," a title properly conferred only on an Admiral, and certainly misapplied to one who has not even a cockboat under his command, and has nothing to do with the sea or aught that sails thereon, further than enjoying a prospect of the ocean from the windows of the fort, and collecting duties on imported and exported merchandize. He is a sallow, sickly-looking young man; and his countenance indicates no sign of genius or talents of any kind. The fort in which he is lodged, stands at one extremity of the town. It is small, and poorly fitted up; con-

* Kargh or Carrack is an island lying about 50 miles northwest of Bushire. It is five miles long, and two broad; and the greater portion of it is well cultivated.

taining apparently a few habitable rooms, with little appearance of comfort.

I certainly did not expect to have commenced the new year in Bushire, having always entertained hopes of a steamer for Bombay, touching at this place ere now; but it seems doubtful whether any steamer will appear before April or May, in which case I must avail myself of the next sailing vessel bound for India.

News has lately reached us that the Prime Minister, Ameer Mirza Takee, has been suddenly dismissed from office, and all his property confiscated — the Shah not choosing to assign the slightest reason for the act. Many and various are the reports and surmises current in the bazâr, regarding the causes which have led to this unexpected proceeding, but no one really knows anything about the matter. A new Prime Minister has been appointed, and the downfallen Ameer placed in custody.

On the 9th of December, rain set in, which continued till after Christmas. The climate is at present delightful.* One can remain out all day without the least inconvenience; the sun being not warmer than in spring in England. The distant mountains are covered with snow, but no snow ever falls at Bushire, or, I believe, in any part of the Germseer; though hoar-frost and thin ice are occasionally to be found at the distance of a few miles from the sea.

* January 2nd, 1852.

One day I accompanied the medical officer attached to the Residency, on a visit to the remains of the old town of Reeshire, five miles distant from Bushire. After passing over about two miles of desert, lying before the gate of Bushire, we reached a part of the peninsula more favoured by nature. Here are several small villages, built of stones; and cultivated lands in their vicinity. The people were busy ploughing after the late rain, and in some places the barley was already coming up. I saw several small vineyards, surrounded with low walls of loose stones: but the grapes of this part of the country are neither abundant nor good. A few large fig-trees are to be seen here and there, with the date and the prickly koonâr.

At a short distance from the old fort of Reeshire, lies the well, from which the best fresh water used in Bushire, is drawn. It is very deep, and extremely narrow. They say that this well was dug by prince Bahman, who ascended the throne of Persia with the title of Ardesheer — surnamed *dirâz-dest* or the "long-handed" (the Artaxerxes Longimanus of the old historians), because, like Rob Roy, his hands reached below the knee as he stood erect.* Reeshire, according to Persian chronicles, was founded by Lohorasp the Keiyânee

* Bahman, afterwards named Ardesheer, was the son of Isfendiyar the brazen-bodied, a prince of great renown in Persian annals. He is one of the most conspicuous heroes in the Shah Nameh.

monarch, and afterwards rebuilt by Shâpoor the Sassanian. The Portuguese were its last possessors, and after their expulsion, the town seems to have been deserted and allowed to fall in ruins, while Bushire gradually rose to be a place of importance. Nothing now remains of Reeshire, except the old fort. The plain round this site, is covered with the debris of what once was the town, but no stone is left standing on another, nor can anything like streets be traced. I saw no carved stonework, nor any remains of bricks: Reeshire seems to have been built of rough stones and mortar, as most part of Bushire is now.

The remains of the fort of Seleem, as it is named, lie on a high land or cliff overlooking the sea. Of this fortification, the only relics extant are the traces of the walls, and the moat encompassing them. It must have been a large castle, for it is about a mile in circumference; the remains of the walls resembling heaps of rubbish, with gaps where the gates were situated. The interior is full of loose stones; but no parts of any building are to be seen, except some fragments of pillars and of stone cisterns. Little bits of red and white cornelian are strewed over the ground in all directions, but how they came hither is doubtful. Particles of gold are sometimes found, but very few coins have been discovered. Cinerary urns are occasionally dug up hereabouts—I saw two of these in Bushire—

they were cylindrical jars of earthenware about a foot high, and filled with what appeared to be calcined bones. From the moat, one may observe the construction of the rock forming the peninsula, which consists of a sandstone basis, with a coral and shell formation above, covered with a thin stratum of soil.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Preparations for returning to India.—Lucky and unlucky Days. — Degradation and Murder of Mirza Takee.—Leave Persia.—Conclusion.

I WAS by this time rather anxious about returning to India; and it did not at all raise my spirits to hear that the steamer, expected before now, was not to be dispatched from thence for some months: I have therefore made up my mind to proceed to Bombay by a vessel now in the harbour, and which will sail in the course of two or three days. The Resident with his family leave this, about the same time, in a ship belonging to the Indian navy, on their way to Bombay, and thence home to England by the next Overland mail. The barque Briton, by which I have taken my passage, is a vessel of 370 tons, from the "lang toun o' Kircaldy," manned by fifteen British seamen, including the captain and mate. But for this favourable opportunity, I should have been obliged to go in an Arab *buggala*, a proceeding to which I confess I entertain a very great objection; for nothing less than dire necessity shall ever compel me to trust myself to an Arab vessel and crew. I have gone on board several of this

description of ship, and the appearance, both above and below decks, has always sufficed to prepossess me strongly against them.

A buggala is a clumsy craft, sometimes of considerable size, as not a few of them are about a hundred feet in length, and upwards of three hundred tons burden. The stern is very high, and generally grotesquely carved and painted, something like that of the ships we see in old pictures of the formidable Spanish Armada. This poop contains one or more cabins. The waist or centre of the vessel has a moveable deck of planks, under which the greater part of the cargo is stowed; and the forecastle is allotted to the crew, generally a numerous body. The bows are low and sharp; and there are two masts with a bowsprit. The masts rake forward, in defiance of all established rules of naval architecture, and each sustains a very lengthy yard, to which is attached an immense sail. The buggala sails but slowly, and is kept close to shore, neither captain nor crew having much knowledge of navigation. They usually have on board a quadrant or sextant, and some one is able to take the sun's meridian altitude: they have also an ephemeris translated into Arabic. The decks are rarely washed during the voyage, and cleanliness is held in contempt. Horses often form the principal portion of the freight, and the dirt and smell must then be past the endurance of any one but Arabs. The deck is, moreover, lumbered with quantities of cargo,

for which there is not room below. Most buggalas are built on the Malabar coast. They are indifferently constructed, and if the bottom once touches ground, they soon go to pieces. I have been told that every one of them is eventually wrecked. The age and frailty of the vessel are never taken into consideration by her owners; and whatever may be the length of time since the craft was built, or whatever the amount of rough usage she has experienced, she is continually sent, voyage after voyage, until one day she goes to pieces. Numbers of them are thus lost every year.

The natives of Persia are fully as superstitious regarding a voyage at sea as a journey on land. The rules of the days of the week, on which voyages are to be undertaken in various directions, are comprised in the following pithy verses: —

سوي مشرق شنبه و دوشنبه
نروي اي برادر من به
آنكه از مغرب آورد كينه
روز يكشنبه است و ادينه
روز سه شنبه و چهار بفال
نروي زينبار بشمال
پنج شنبه چو سر برآرد خور
رخت خود جانب جنوب مبر

"On Saturday and Monday, O my brother, it is best not to proceed towards the East. From the West, danger impends on Sunday and Friday. On Tuesday and Wednesday beware lest thy destiny leads thee towards the North. And when Thursday's sun hath risen, never direct thy course to the South."

The Persians detest the sea, and scarce a single individual of their nation has ever been known to embrace the profession of a sailor. The Arabs, on the contrary, seem to be fond of the ocean, and of a nautical life. By all accounts, the early Mahomedans greatly mistrusted the vasty deep; for most of them belonged to inland tribes, and had never even seen a salt billow. The khaleefa Omar, writing to his general Amru Ben Aas, after the latter had conquered Egypt, asked him what the sea was like? Amru replied, "The sea is like a great pool, which some inconsiderate people furrow." Not a very satisfactory answer, we should think; but Omar was so far impressed with ideas of the dangers and difficulties attendant on a sea voyage, that he forbade all navigation among Mussulmans!—a piece of folly and short-sightedness worthy only of the barbarian who burnt the Alexandrian library. Moaviyah, the usurper of the khalifate, afterwards took off this prohibition, and encouraged navigation to the utmost of his power.

The most favourable time of the year for navigating the Gulf is between September and April. In the summer, a voyage is tedious and unsafe, as in June and July, the *shemâl* or north-west wind blows furiously down the Gulf, and renders navigation dangerous. At present the *shemâl* is comparatively mild, and always cold; while the *sherkee* or south-west wind, and the *kous* or south wind, render the atmosphere warm. The first

blows from the snow-clad mountains of Western Persia and Koordistan, while the two latter pass over the dry heated sands of Arabia.

The principal seaports of Southern Persia are Bushire, Lingâr, on the coast near the west extremity of the isle of Kishm, and Bunderabbas, near the east end of the same island. These are the only places of any importance. The shipping is almost entirely in the hands of the Arabs, as well as the greater part of the trade at the two last-named ports.

The climate of Bushire has been very fine since my arrival, and my health has been much re-established. The glass generally stands at 40° in the morning early, and a good wood fire is a cheerful and agreeable companion in a room during the whole day.*

The tedious illness I have lately had, has completely frustrated a project I had in contemplation. At the time I quitted Ispahan, I had fully intended visiting Baghdad from Bushire, and perchance finding my way up the Tigris, to Mosul and ancient Nineveh — previous to returning to India. This design has been baulked by my unlucky fever and slow recovery; and now I have neither time, nor much inclination, to prosecute my travels in these parts any further.

On the 24th of January, a *khelât* or dress of honour arrived for the governor of Bushire, as a

* February 7th.

mark of approbation for his capture of Carrack, as they are pleased to call it, namely, the attempt to catch Sheikh Hosein in that island, to which I formerly alluded. The attempt was, after all, a piece of the grossest treachery; for the men who arrived in Carrack, deputed to secure the person of the Arab outlaw, in the first place entered his service, and swore fidelity to him, upon the Koran! The plot, however well devised, failed decidedly, and the rebel Sheikh escaped to laugh at the beards of his treacherous foes: but a dress of honour was nevertheless decreed for the *deryabegee*, and he went forth to receive it, in a tent pitched a mile in front of the gate of the town, where the *firmân* was read aloud, and the honorary shawl and cloak presented. Orders were proclaimed that all persons living in Bushire should hoist flags upon their housetops, on this auspicious occasion; and the way in which these commands were obeyed was rather amusing. Flags the poor people had none: but the roof of every little house displayed a stick or reed, with an old pocket-handkerchief, a turban cloth, a chemise, or a pair of wide inexpressibles, attached thereto; producing a gay and striking effect; the festive impression being further augmented by the discharge of several rounds of damaged gunpowder, from an old cannon in the fort.

In my last letter, I made mention of the degradation of the Ameer, Mirza Takee; and I have just now received, from Tehrân, intelligence

of the death, or rather murder, of that unfortunate man, who has been destroyed by order of his royal master, whom he had served only too faithfully; raising up, by his zeal and devotion to duty, a host of enemies, who have succeeded in effecting his ruin and assassination. The ex-premier, after being for a short time in custody at the capital, was permitted to withdraw and live in retirement at the palace of Feenn near Kashan, where he resided, a sort of prisoner at large. Like all who have at first been favoured, and afterwards abandoned, by the blind and fickle goddess, he was deserted and spurned by his former friends and dependents, who had lived on his bounty. His wife, the Shah's sister, who was much attached to her husband, had feared that some attempt might be made on his life, and always remained close at his side to protect him by her presence; but when leave was granted to retire to Feenn, and her royal brother had solemnly assured her of his future safety, she had of late omitted this precaution; hoping that the Ameer might, in process of time, be restored to rank and favour, when the Shah's indignation had blown over.

The *ferrásh-báshee*, or chief of the royal household menials, a man who owes his position to the Ameer's patronage, was dispatched to Kashan to perpetrate the murder. It is said that he was, at his own request, commissioned to execute the deed, in order to ingratiate himself with the

Shah and the new Prime Minister. On his arrival at Kashan, he at once repaired to Feenn with a party of ferrâshes, and found his victim walking in the garden of the palace. The Ameer was immediately seized, bound, and carried outside of the gate; where the veins in both of his arms were opened, and he was allowed to bleed to death, his murderers meanwhile mocking and insulting the dying man, in the grossest manner. It is also reported that the Ameer's son, a lad of fourteen, was then handed over to the brutal ferrâshes to be dealt with in a way at which humanity shudders!

The princess, who was in the Zenâna, at the time when her husband was seized in the garden, hearing some disturbance, attempted to come forth, but the assassins had taken the precaution to secure the doors; and after all was over, she was informed that the Ameer had been conveyed away, to be placed in confinement at Ardebeel. The Shah intends giving his widowed sister in marriage to another man, without loss of time.

Such is the account I have received, and considering the authority, I do not question its accuracy. The real motives of the Shah, for thus degrading and destroying his brother-in-law, but lately his favourite and best trusted counsellor, are known probably to none save a few parties immediately concerned, and it is in vain to speculate regarding them. The late Ameer, it is said, sometimes presumed on his position, influence,

and connexion, and took liberties with the royal prerogative: he was also well known to be no friend to the pious clique of seiyids and moollahs: and there are many other causes that might tend to excite the capricious wrath of the Shah, uncontrolled by any sense of justice or humanity.

Murders like this are by no means rare occurrences in Persia. When a man has become too powerful, or is suspected of being mischievous, rich or honest, or should circumstances in any way render his removal expedient, he is usually put to death. The system is maintained under Persian despotism, much the same as it was under the anarchy of ancient Rome, when even Cicero attempted to justify the atrocious scheme as necessary and allowable.

Bombay, March 10th, 1852.

On the eleventh of February I left Bushire in the barque Briton; the Resident having quitted the station, the day previous, in the sloop of war Clive, bound for Muscat, whence he proceeds with his family to Bombay, in order to return to England.

Of my own voyage little need be said. The Briton sailed from Bushire with a *shemâl* wind, which in four days carried us out of the Gulf beyond Mussendom, and on the following day we were nearly becalmed off Cape Jask: next morning a fine breeze sprang up, and carried

us steadily and quietly to Bombay, where I landed, seventeen days after quitting Bushire.

I had been a year and four months in Persia; and my curiosity having been amply satisfied, I left it without feeling in any way concerned at parting, or experiencing any wish or hope of returning — for, although I by no means regret having travelled and dwelt in famed Eerân, there is nothing in the poor miserable country or its depraved and wretched sons, that could excite in me the least desire to revisit it.

As regards the national and individual character of the people among whom I have lately sojourned, the picture I have drawn in the course of my Journal is, I fear, a very dark one. I can only say — would to God it were brighter! — but as I at all times prefer stating what I believe to be simple truth, to indulging in visionary speculation regarding virtues, of the existence of which I have never been fortunate enough to discover any symptom, I am compelled to paint the Persians in what I am fully convinced are their true colours. The spectacle of Persia is certainly not a pleasing one — a poor and weak nation, sinking into apparently hopeless wretchedness — a people who, properly guided and governed, would be a fine and noble race, demoralized and vicious to the very core — corruption and insecurity in every department — dissolution and rottenness everywhere prevailing. The Persian (I speak in general terms, without regard to

a few individual exceptions) seems to be destitute of a conscience. Truth and honesty are qualities, in his estimation, only fit to be held and exercised by fools and madmen. He has no feeling of the force of moral obligations, or sense of shame and disgrace, and is callous to every generous impulse. He is unmindful of kindnesses and benefits; but, on the other hand, extremely sensible of affronts and injuries, and of a most vindictive temper. No experience, of Indians even, could prepare the stranger for the amount of profound falsehood, duplicity, and despicable meanness, of which the Persian can, at all times, be guilty, without blush or hesitation.

The heart of a Persian I believe to be, in reality, neither worse nor better than that of an Englishman; but whatever innate good qualities the Eerânee may possess (and I will not suppose him to be less gifted in this respect than ourselves), are spoiled and crushed, or I should rather say, never awakened or called into action, in his present condition. Like most other people, Persians are creatures of circumstances; and a wretchedly bad government, a worse religion, a social system which obliges men to exercise perpetual deceit, an absence of all good example, a defective education, and a want of proper training, have made them what they are.

The Persian is almost entirely cut off from all intercourse with the civilized nations of Europe, and this isolation begets a spirit of self-conceit

and narrow-mindedness destructive to improvement. Morier has said, and I believe with truth, "In talent and natural capacity, the Persians are equal to any nation in the world: in good feeling and honesty, and in the higher qualities of man, they would be equally so, were their education and their government favourable to their growth." If they enjoyed half the opportunities that the natives of India possess, of acquiring civilization, they would soon avail themselves of the blessing. They are excellent material for making good men, if their minds were but directed in the right path, and fortified with right principles; while the Indian is imbecile in mind as well as body, and education and example are too often thrown away on an object unfit to profit by them. It is true that we see a few specimens of really good, intelligent, and amiable Hindoos: but among a hundred millions of people, it would be hard indeed if a dozen or two of worthy men could not be found.

At present, there is no hope for Persia, save a total change, subverting every existing institution of the country and people. Nothing short of an alteration so complete and radical, can be attended with any substantial benefit; for in the present state of the nation, real improvement is utterly hopeless.

"Thus far, with rough and all unable pen," have I pursued the story of my travels; and now back in India, I bring my Journal to a conclusion, well gratified with all that I have seen and en-

joyed. My notes have all been taken at the places which I have endeavoured to describe; and as everything has been written down on the spot, or immediately after, my impressions, however badly set forth, are recorded in the fresh state in which they were presented to my mind, together with whatever ideas or train of thought they might have suggested at the time. I have, now and then, referred to the works of former travellers, and availed myself of the information they afford; but where I have found their statements differ from my own conclusions, I have never moulded my opinions by what they have written, but followed my own views on the subject; for which, if incorrect, I am alone to blame. Of the manifold inperfections of the diary I have attempted, I am fully conscious; but I doubt not I shall find such charitable constructions put upon my deficiencies, as to satisfy me that I have gained my point, which was solely to amuse the party to whom these sheets have been sent, and for whom alone, the record of my travels has been intended. In comparison with a former Journal, this, I fear, will be found dull and uninteresting—but the fault is not mine. In Egypt and Palestine, there was so much to see, to amuse and instruct, that I had a large amount of interesting matter to communicate: such was not the case in Persia, where there is little worth looking at, and little to be told that can interest friends at home.

And now, after a short and agreeable voyage, I

have returned to the land in which, for the present time, my lot is cast; with a thankful heart to God, whose mercy has protected me through travels by land and water, and brought me in safety to the end of my wanderings.

Though Persia is certainly not the country I should choose to live in, I have found the petty disagreeables of a residence in that kingdom fully compensated by the instruction and amusement I have derived. "All the world," as Sterne observes, "is barren to him who will not cultivate the fruits it offers" — and the route from Dan to Beersheba would be barren indeed, were I to incur the Sentimental Traveller's pity by failing to find something to interest me on the way.

During the summer seasons of hot and copper skies, and burning land-winds, in this our Indian empire — if it please God to prolong my life in this country — I may perchance call to mind the frozen valleys and barren hills of Fars and Irauk, and fancy myself once more traversing these snow-clad deserts; while there are also agreeable incidents that will hold a place in my memory to gladden the retrospect of my wanderings, when the slight inconveniences that marred the full enjoyment of life in Eerân, shall have been long buried in oblivion.

THE END.

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